

NEW YORK POST

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1998

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Residents fume as film chopper buzzes 5th Ave.

By PHILIP MESSING
and BILL SANDERSON

Authorities are investigating whether a helicopter being used in a movie shoot came dangerously close to Fifth Avenue apartment buildings last night.

"It was dangerous and reckless. It was bloody outrageous," said a 40-year-old author who lives in a building on the corner of East 61st Street. "It astounded me. It went on for four hours."

The woman, who asked not to be identified, said the helicopter at one point swooped down Fifth Avenue 20 feet from her balcony and 100 feet above her 15th-floor apartment.

Federal rules require helicopters to fly 2,000 feet laterally from buildings, and at least 500

feet above them.

The woman said the chopper made so much noise, police couldn't hear her when she called to complain.

Joy Held, president of the Helicopter Noise Coalition, saw the craft as she strolled in Central Park.

"It was flying very low, and it was very, very noisy," she said.

Police at the 19th Precinct said they were inundated by complaints as the chopper flew around between 6:30 and 11 p.m.

A police source said a film crew had permission to use a seven-passenger helicopter in a movie shoot from 8:30 to 11 p.m.

It was not immediately known what movie was being filmed.

FINC P409

The New York Times

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 9, 1998

B11

Study Rejects New Limits on Helicopters

By AMY WALDMAN

A draft of the city's first comprehensive analysis of its heliport infrastructure and helicopter activity has concluded that the city should continue its year-old ban on sightseeing flights from the 34th Street Heliport, but it does not call for new regulations on corporate or commercial traffic.

The analysis, which is called the Heliport and Helicopter Master Plan and was provided to community board members this week, immediately drew objections from critics who have lobbied the city to place further restrictions on helicopter flights, which they assert are too noisy and potentially unsafe. The plan, the critics said, broke little new policy ground and did not address issues including when helicopters should be allowed to operate and the altitudes at which they should be allowed to fly.

Charles Millard, the president of the Economic Development Corporation, which controls the 34th Street Heliport and commissioned the study, said the city was "in discussion" with the State Department of Transportation about a similar ban

Issues of noise and safety in the thousands of flights over Manhattan.

on sightseeing flights at the heliport the state owns, at West 30th Street and the Hudson River.

Mr. Millard said the city would carry out a recommendation in the plan to construct fuel tanks at the East 34th Street Heliport as a means of reducing the thousands of helicopter trips across the city to the only existing refueling site, at the West 30th Street Heliport on the Hudson River. The city will also build a noise barrier around the landside perimeter of the East 34th Street Heliport, he said, and it will consider offering financial incentives, like lower landing fees, to helicopter operators that fly quieter new technology, an idea praised by helicopter industry representatives.

A third heliport, at Pier 6 and the Battery, is owned by the Port Authority, which cannot ban sightseeing flights because of Federal restrictions. Those restrictions end in 2005, and at that point, the plan says, the city will ban sightseeing flights from there.

Deputy Mayor Randy Levine said yesterday that the plan tries to balance quality-of-life and economic interests. "We should not have tourist helicopters flying all over New York," he said, "but New York needs flights for commerce."

But the plan quickly brought criticism from advocates of greater restrictions on helicopter traffic. Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, a Manhattan Democrat and a proponent of stricter Federal aviation regulation for helicopters, criticized the plan for not addressing "overflights, minimum heights and curfews."

Joy Held, the founder of the Helicopter Noise Coalition, which represents 18,000 people, said the plan did nothing to reduce sightseeing flights from privately owned heliports, nor

did it curb the number of corporate or media flights. "The sum total of this plan is that nothing is changing while the Mayor is claiming victory over the issue," she said.

Mr. Millard pointed out that the city had closed a heliport at East 60th Street at the end of February, and that traffic from the East 34th Street Heliport has been cut by 65 percent since the city ended sightseeing flights from there last August. There have been 41,875 flights so far this year from the three heliports, according to the Economic Development Corporation. In 1996, the latest year for which figures were available, there were 138,104 flights.

The plan does not address media helicopters because none take off from heliports in the city.

Matthew S. Zuccaro, a spokesman for the Eastern Region Helicopter Council, a trade association representing 86 companies, called the plan a "good foundation" for the city's helicopter and heliport operating system. But he agreed that the document set little new policy.

Mr. Zuccaro criticized the city's ban on sightseeing flights and its effort to get the state to do the same. "It seems," he said, "to be politically correct and expedient at this point, based on concerns about noise, to say, 'Okay, we'll just eliminate that segment of the industry.'"

The industry, he said, had made a substantial effort to regulate itself. Sightseeing companies have changed their routes to avoid flying over residential neighborhoods, he said, in addition to increasing the altitudes at which they fly, and stopped flying over Manhattan completely, instead coursing along the Hudson River. Mr. Zuccaro said he was also working on an operations manual for the city's eight news-gathering helicopters.

Mr. Zuccaro praised the city for not carrying out more of the activists' demands. "The Helicopter Noise Coalition," he said, "has indicated that their ultimate and only goal is to close all heliports and eliminate all helicopter traffic in the city, except for emergency flights."

Ms. Held responded, "That is definitely our goal."

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Ready for Takeoff? Heliprot in Park Prompts Protest

BY ALICE WOLFRAM

In the wake of a comprehensive analysis of the financial and environmental issues surrounding helicopter activity in New York City, plans to build a heliport in the future Hudson River Park are still up in the air.

The Hudson River Park Act, passed by the state Legislature last month and awaiting signature by Gov. George Pataki, allows for the construction of a heliport in the park. So far, both Piers 76 and 72 have been cited as possible sites.

Still, the public outcry that accompanied the introduction of such a proposal into the legislation continues.

"It will make Manhattan into an airport," said Joy Held, president of the Helicopter Noise Coalition.

"No one can deny that a heliport is a potentially dangerous quality-of-life nightmare for the host community," wrote Community Board 4 (CB4) Chair Pamela Frederick and CB4 waterfront preservation and planning committee Chair Robert Gregory in a May 13 letter to city officials. "There can be no doubt that heliports have no place in a public park designed to provide a respite from the demands of urban life."

Plans for the new heliport are being discussed in the wake of the city Economic Development Corporation's (EDC) recent release of an 800-page draft of the Heliport and Helicopter

from the noise and consider offering financial incentives to operators using new, quieter technology.

Critics of the plan say these measures are not enough. "They're talking about redistributing traffic to 'community-compatible' heliports," said Held. "We say there are no

'There are tons of tourists from all around the world who are putting a lot of money into Manhattan, and they want to see New York by air.'

— Kathleen Wilg of T.D. Aviation

'community-compatible' heliports."

Held added that many noise complaints come not from residents in the immediate vicinity of the heliports but from people complaining about loud helicopter traffic overhead.

Berman agreed. "It's the volume of traffic overhead which really causes the problem, and

the report completely ignores this."

The EDC plan deals with the helicopters which take off or land in New York City heliports, not those that fly through city airspace without touching down.

"There are a lot of flights that fly over us, and they don't count in the statistics," Held said. "If you fly from Bedford to Philadelphia right outside my window, you're never counted."

EDC spokesperson Bernadette O'Leary, however, said New York

City airspace falls under the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the city can control activity only at its own heliports. "The city has no jurisdiction on regulating flight routes or altitudes over the city," she said. "That's a federal issue."

Held also charged that the EDC plan has "no teeth." "The plan says a lot of good things, but it doesn't provide a mechanism to make them happen," she said. "It hasn't amounted to a hill of beans."

To this criticism, O'Leary responded that it is not the job of the EDC to enforce its recommendations. "The bottom line is that this is the first step and the first time the city has done a comprehensive analysis of the helicopter system," she added, "that the plan suggests that the

city create an oversight committee to address issues of public concern.

And the plan could amount to more than a "hill of beans" for the West 30th Street heliport, which has been handling a heavier traffic load since the closing of the East 60th Street heliport in February and the enactment of last year's ban on sightseeing tours out of the East 34th Street heliport.

In 2005, FAA jurisdiction over New York City's other heliport on Wall Street will expire and the city will take over. If the city chooses to extend its policy of banning sightseeing tours from its heliports at the downtown heliport, the West 30th Street heliport could be the only one still offering tours.

And even the future of tours at West 30th Street is uncertain, as the possibility remains that the state may follow suit and ban helicopter tours there as well.

Kathleen Wilg, executive assistant at T.D. Aviation Inc., which offers helicopter tours in Manhattan, said a ban on sightseeing tours from the West 30th Street heliport would mean all Saturday and Sunday tours would have to be canceled, since the downtown heliport, the only other heliport still offering sightseeing tours, is closed on weekends.

"There are tons of tourists from all around the world who are putting a lot of money into Manhattan, and they want to see New York by air," she said.

THURSDAY, JULY 30, 1998

B1

The Metro Section

The New York Times

Hudson Park Draws Closer To Reality

Proponents Celebrate Approval by Albany

By DOUGLAS MARTIN

The invitation was in the form of a birth announcement. The baby's name: Hudson River Park, eyes "marine blue" and hair "naturally green."

The gestation period was given as 14 years, the amount of time park proponents have been fighting to transform Manhattan's ragged, derelict western edge into a lush if skinny new park. Last night, they came together — environmentalists, public officials and community advocates — on Pier 40 in Greenwich Village to celebrate state legislation officially establishing the park and defining its borders and governance.

While the plan still faces regulatory hurdles, questions about financing and the possibility of lawsuits, proponents were exultant over what had been accomplished so far.

"All of us, even the most optimistic — we're amazed at what we got," said Ross Graham of the parks committee of Community Board 4 in Chelsea.

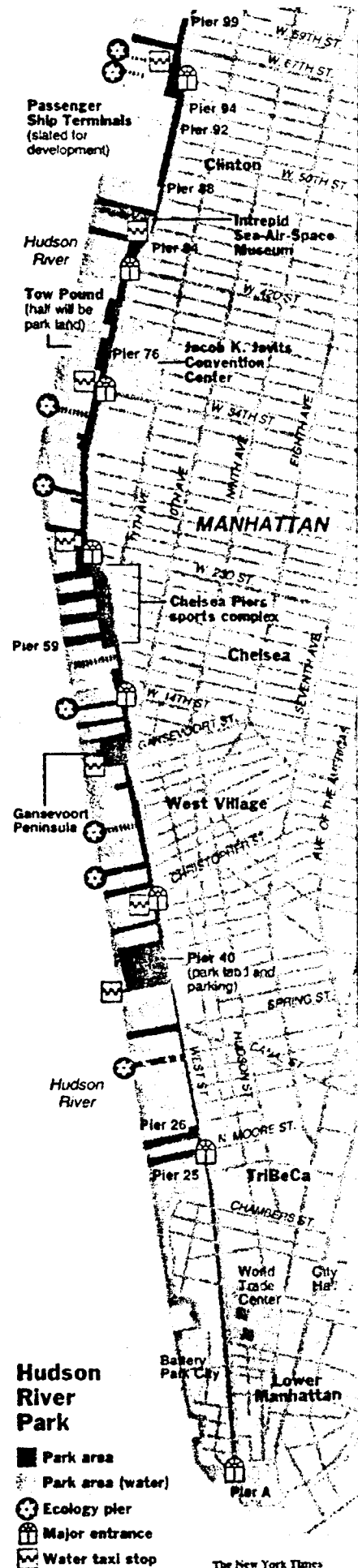
Under the new law — which was passed by the Legislature last month and is expected to be signed by Gov. George E. Pataki in September — 19 piers will be entirely or partly included in the park, offering myriad forms of recreation. Along the park's length will be a bike path, trees and flowers, education centers, places to dip one's toes in the water and, possibly, sand beaches.

Some crumbling piers, which the public will only be allowed to observe from the esplanade, will be planted with native plants to attract nesting birds.

Gone in the year 2000 will be an equestrian center that until recently was offering lifetime memberships, an enormous basketball center and helicopter sightseeing flights. Such municipal uses as salt storage and parking lots for towed cars and garbage trucks are to be removed as soon as the city finds a place to move them. Gambling casinos will be banned, and most of the piers will be off limits to development.

Striped bass, eels and other fish species are to be strictly protected in a new estuarial sanctuary extending the length of the park, from Battery Park City to 59th Street.

"This is the highest possible level of protection for the living resources,"



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Cont.

The New York Times

FINC P412

Hudson Park Draws Closer to Becoming a Reality

Continued From Page B1

said Cathy Drew, director of the River Project, which does aquatic research in the Hudson.

The city and state, which own the land, had been proceeding with plans for the park even before the legislation passed, but without the new law any portion could have been withdrawn at any time.

"What we have now is a dedicated park," said Albert K. Butzel, a lawyer who headed a coalition of environmentalists and community groups to support the park. "This is a night-and-day difference."

But, celebrants last night readily acknowledged that the battle over the park was not over. Opponents, who mostly fear that the plan cedes too much to commercial interests and does not give enough protection to the river ecology, are fighting the park in Federal and state permit hearings that could lead to long environmental reviews and major modifications. Lawsuits are anticipated. Finding funds is a major challenge. "Our grandchildren will be arguing about what should and shouldn't go in this park," said Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried, an author of the bill, whose district includes part of the park.

Construction of the park, which is

expected to begin this fall, is the latest chapter in the battle over the Hudson waterfront, growing out of the ill-fated Westway proposal.

That plan, for a superhighway that was to be built on 200 acres of landfill, was defeated in the mid-1980's by a coalition of community advocates and environmentalists. Westway's opponents then went on to fight one another bitterly over the park vision proposed and refined by a succession of task forces and panels.

At the core of the quintessential West Side battle has been the park planners' determination to use commercial developments to finance the park's operations. Some residents feared people streaming to a string of Chelsea Piers-like attractions, while some environmentalists contended that a park dependent mainly on refurbished piers would inevitably harm fish.

But park proponents saw the chance to create a regional recreational jewel out of industrial rot, and some environmentalists were determined to use park legislation to secure wild resources.

Attempts to give the park legal definition failed throughout the 1990's, as a cacophony of voices and interests clashed. This time, however, Governor Pataki was determined to build the park and Mayor Rudolph

W. Giuliani showed a willingness to compromise on issues of governing and control.

In the final hours of the legislative session, the Assembly Speaker, Sheldon Silver, decided to support the plan even at the risk of allowing a Republican governor and mayor to take credit.

"The basic message is that people chose to do the right thing," said Mr. Butzel, a leading Westway foe who lobbied furiously for the bill's pas-

Hurdles remain, but plans move ahead to transform the waterfront.

sage.

The park's construction will follow the rebuilding of West Street, which began last year and is scheduled to be completed in 2003. The rebuilt road, 40 percent smaller than the 10-lane Westway, is intended to facilitate access to the park.

Under the terms of the legislation,

the state, which owns the southern half of the park, and the city, which owns the northern, will lease their land to a new entity, to be called the Hudson River Park Trust. This met a city demand that it not cede ownership of any land. Another city victory was the creation of a governing structure in which the Governor and Mayor will each appoint five board members.

The three community boards included in the park will each appoint a director, with two eligible to vote. But all major decisions require eight votes, meaning the Governor and Mayor must agree for anything important to pass.

In one example of the compromise that went into the final plan, the Giuliani administration refused to include the four passenger ship terminals from 48th to 54th Streets in the park, and instead will explore development options from television studios to a large mall. But 15 percent, and ultimately 20 percent, of the city's revenue from that development will go to the park.

Among other specific provisions is a guarantee that half of Pier 40 in Greenwich Village will be park land, with automobile parking specifically authorized for the rest. Half of Pier 76, where the tow pound is, will ultimately be park land. So will Pier 84, which has been used for Circle Line parking.

On July 16, the board of the Empire State Development Corporation approved an environmental impact statement for the project. Then a 120-day period began in which lawsuits can be brought. State officials, speaking on the condition that they not be named, said they expected to be sued.

The Army Corps of Engineers must also review plans for the reconstruction work on the piers and bulkhead. Opponents raised objections at recent hearings, and the National Marine Fisheries Service submitted a letter to the corps raising questions about fish habitat.

"They're raising issues which need to be considered carefully," said James Haggerty, chief of the corps's Eastern Permits Section.

He said the corps could require an environmental impact statement, which would take at least a year. That process, the same one used to bring down Westway, could also bring lawsuits and further delays. Marcy Benstock, a leading foe of both Westway and the park, said the plans — including the legislation — were "riddled with sneaky loopholes."

Questions also remain about financing. Both the city and state have promised \$100 million, but the construction cost is conservatively estimated at \$320 million. Private firms raising proposals are being analyzed.

But some suggest that the battles are at least losing intensity. Arthur Schwartz, chairman of the water-front committee of Community Board 3 in Greenwich Village, went from being a vocal foe to a strong supporter. Since the legislation passed, he said, even bitter opponents are avidly joining discussions about design details.

"Most people are starting to focus on the reality," he said.

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Hudson River piers, in good times and bad: left, ocean liners docked at the passenger ship terminals in 1957; right, a rotting pier at the foot of Bank Street in 1990. Under legislation officially establishing Hudson River Park, some crumbling piers will be turned into habitats for nesting birds.

The New York Times



Vic DelLucia/The New York Times

HWC
P
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Chelsea Clinton News

Aug. 6-12, 1998 p.2

Chopper Chide

To the Editor:

Tons of city residents pay tons of rent and property taxes to live here ["Ready for Take-off," July 16-22]. The degradation of our homes by helicopter noise and fumes constitutes "a taking of property." Helicopter tours are both frivolous and un-

LETTERS

necessary. Tourists can see New York by boat, bus, carriage and on foot - without ruining residents' lives in the process. No one comes here to take a helicopter tour. Furthermore, foreign visitors (who comprise the

vast majority of customers) tell us these tours would never be allowed in their home cities! By what right and what logic are the health and well-being of countless city residents being sacrificed to the fleeting amusement of visitors?

Joy A. Held
President, Helicopter Noise
Coalition

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NEW YORK POST

LATE CITY FINAL

MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 1998 / Showers likely, 80-85 / Weather: Page 27 ★★

NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 1998
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NEAL TRAVIS
NEW YORK

Trump eyes whirlybird nest

HE'S always had sky-high ambitions, so will anyone be surprised to learn that Donald Trump is considering putting a helipad on top of his new Fifth Avenue trophy, the General Motors building?

The Donald's not commenting, but I understand his lawyers have been studying city statutes with a view to applying for all the necessary permissions.

News of this scheme will infuriate residents of Fifth Avenue and Central Park South, but many captains of industry will side with Trump, on the grounds that the world's greatest city needs a place in its heart to land choppers.

Until that terrible chopper accident that left debris spread for blocks around Midtown, the old Pan Am (now MetLife) building served the purpose and didn't

really bother anyone in the neighborhood too much.

Mayor Rudy has been critical of the East River helipads and has reduced operations at them. But he might go along with Trump's proposal on the grounds that a GM chopper operation would actually disturb fewer residents.

Trump's people will likely argue that new engineering methods will allow better soundproofing and safer operations atop the GM office tower. And it would be a daytime-only operation.

It will be interesting to see the reaction to Trump's scheme. At this stage, it's something of a trial balloon, but the Donald quite often gets what he wants and he should have some powerful support in this case.

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September 16, 1998

ER, p. 3

The Villager

West Village, East Village, Chelsea, Soho, Tribeca and Lower East Side

Copter plan is criticized

Community Boards in the Village and Chelsea declared last week that the city's Heliport and Helicopter Master Plan does not go far enough to protect their neighborhoods from the noise and potential danger of helicopters.

The Sept 10 hearing at One Police Plaza on a draft of the helicopter plan also was criticized by elected officials and members of the New York City Helicopter Noise Coalition. The plan's assertion that the Giuliani Administration intends to end sightseeing flights as soon as possible, was not enough to win support.

"When we finally get our Hudson River Park, we don't want it polluted by helicopters on Pier 76 or 72," said Frieda Bradlow, chairperson of the Community Board 2 noise subcommittee and a Village

resident.

The proposal to develop a heliport on Pier 76, where the municipal auto tow pound is now, was deferred pending completion of the master plan. The draft report, however, leaves open the possibility that either that pier, or the derelict Pier 72 just north of the state-owned 30th St. Heliport, could become a new heliport.

Community Board 4, which covers Chelsea, also cited the proposed Hudson River Park project and restated its opposition to locating any heliport on the West Side waterfront.

Sightseeing flights now operate from the 30th St. heliport and from the Downtown heliport owned by the city but leased to the Port of New York Authority. The Downtown heliport will revert to city control in 2003.

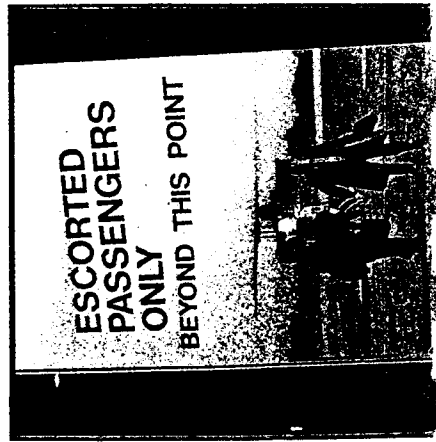
HNC 40.417

New York anti-helo crowd targets city's sightseers

Aviation International News Oct. 1, 1998 p. 70

by Bill Wagstaff

In its new Heliport and Helicopter Master Plan of the City of New York (a massive 420-page report outlining the status of helicopter use in the skies and on the helipads of Manhattan), the result of almost two years' work, is a detailed study setting forth the city's policy toward rotorcraft travel well into the next century. Taken as a whole, it reflects the traditional agenda of anti-helicopter forces. The paper recommends close noise monitoring of heliports and helicopter routes, preferred treatment of low-noise and Notar-style rotorcraft, no new heliport growth, the gradual complete phaseout of aerial sightseeing ops over New York City and the installation of refueling facilities at two of the three remaining Manhattan heliports (the third surviving heliport, West 30th Street, already has refueling capability. It is thought that on-site refueling facilities reduce the number of low-altitude ferry flights). In short, it represents the agenda of many anti-helicopter groups active in New York City today. Accordingly, it will almost certainly be rejected completely when the City Council meets to Apart from the closure of the E. 60th St. heliport, a favorite jumping-off point for New York's power elite, corporates have escaped the city's policy.



(a.k.a. National) Helicopter. Tired of seven years of rent arrears and seven years of what the city felt was debt evasion under Chapter 11, the city evicted Island from East 34th, and then banned the heliport for use by other sightseer operators. The fact that the city of New York owns East 34th made evictions fast and easy. Out went Island, and without its primary revenue source (at its peak in the early 1970s, it moved some 175,000 tourists around Manhattan annually) it was just a matter of weeks before it went out of business.

What was left at East 34th Street was a useful little heliport with walls of public opinion built all around it. Under present rules, it is open for public use from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays and closed on weekends effective Oct. 31. According to Steve Jacobs of the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the city set a goal of curbing helicopter activity over the city by 47 percent "and most recent figures show we've actually reduced ops by 67 percent".

Sightseeing Not Crucial

One blockbuster remains. In the past, all portions of the civil helicopter operation have been regarded as having equal weight and possessing an equal right to operate. Not so anymore. "The city doesn't consider sightseeing a crucial operation and will not back it at city-owned facilities," said Michael Carey of the New York City EDC. The city, according to Carey, has simply concluded that commercial sightseeing isn't worth the noise and airspace, thereby turning its back on roughly \$24 mil-

lion of heliport use revenue.

Stepping into the National sightseeing void was Liberty Helicopter, which voluntarily agreed to view the Manhattan skyline while staying within the confines of the Hudson River exclusion, an overwater two-way VFR corridor with an extension to swing around the Statue of Liberty. The new sightseer used the West 30th Street Heliport, the city's oldest public-use facility, at various times slated to be destroyed and then retained as part of the on-again/off-again West Side Highway program. West 30th's fate was sealed a few weeks ago when New York governor George Pataki signed a bill designating the area part of a new Hudson River State Park, planned to stretch along Manhattan's West Side. In signing the bill, Pataki joined Giuliani in putting into effect a stated policy of no new sightseeing operations over Manhattan with an eventual aim of barring this type of operation from Manhattan skies altogether. (It should be remembered that sightseeing once made up nearly two-thirds of the helicopter traffic over Manhattan.) "The city has effectively decided that sightseeing does not substantially contribute to the city economically, that tourists came to New York City before there were helicopters and they'll continue to come after the helicopters are gone," said Carey. "Major world-class cities like London and Paris don't have aerial sightseeing, so why should New York?"

Since New York does not own its airspace, Liberty could pull back its base of operations away from the city, to locales such as Hobo-



ken, N.J. and still legally treat passengers to the outstanding view from the Hudson Corridor.

So with both East 34th and West 30th now, or eventually, barred to sightseeing operations, a tourist's only alternative is the Downtown Manhattan Heliport (DMH), otherwise known as the "Wall Street Heliport." Since it was upgraded to its present-day technically sophisticated status via an FAA grant, the city has only partial control, at least until 2007, when the city regains full control of the facility.

In the report, the city opposes further heliport development uptown, specifically in the West Side Pier 76 location, home to a proposed tiltrotor vertiport site. The project dates back to 1995, when a U.S. Navy surplus helicopter carrier, the U.S.S. *Guadalcanal*, was proposed as a waterfront heliport alternative. After community opposition to use of the carrier sank that project, the alternative use of the Pier was proposed, a structure long enough to place helicopters' takeoffs and landings as far as 500 ft from the nearest shore. Concerned about traffic levels and noise in a nearby residential community, the city abandoned the proposal.

Another proposed Manhattan rest area for rotorcraft is reportedly under study by the Trump organization. Billionaire entrepreneur Donald Trump is said to be interested in establishing a heliport atop midtown Manhattan's General Motors Building, just across from the Plaza Hotel at 59th Street and Fifth Avenue. Fueled by the public's bad memories of the fatal rollover of a New York Airways shuttle from the 60th floor rooftop heliport of the Pan Am building, the Big Apple's anti-helicopter forces have singled out this proposed project for especially vigorous opposition.

A ban on further aero sightseeing, no new heliports, curfews on operating hours—the Master Plan seems sure to fulfill the needs of every concerned community group, right? Wrong. In hearings following release of the report and preceding its presentation to the city council for either adoption or rejection, the overwhelming reaction was against its findings, for the most part not because it is considered too strident but because it is not considered sufficiently strict. Particularly upsetting to citizens' groups was a passage dealing with noise that concluded there is no serious noise disturbance, particularly to sleep.

Electronic News Gathering: A New Source for Noise

Aides for an assortment of Manhattan area politicians were on hand at a recent public meeting to lay forth their bosses' positions on the Master Plan; none was in favor of it. Many thought it lacked sufficient depth of research, others that it gave short shrift to the problems of noise pollution. Nearly every group commenting on the Master Plan applauded its pro-

posed elimination of sightseeing flights. Corporate operations were scarcely mentioned. However, nearly every elected official decried the Master Plan's omission of traffic-watch and electronic newsgathering operations. ENG helicopters are a relatively new addition to New York airspace.

A broad spectrum of opposition has focused on ENG helos in the New York area, since rotorcraft for the most part operate from a dead hover over news sites. Of course, one man's news site is another man's quiet neighborhood, and a traffic-watch helicopter hovering over an immobilized expressway in the early morning hours is a flying noise issue complete with its own main and tail rotor.

One of the chief missions from such flights is to provide video of the ground traffic situation. "One of the most absurd things I've ever heard of," testified one irate Upper West Side citizen who claims ENG news helos hover over his neighborhood at altitudes well below 1,000 ft AGL for up to an hour. "If you're stuck in traffic or trying to keep from getting that way, you don't need pictures of jams. Not any people I know carry TVs in their cars. Besides, a traffic jam in New York is not exactly news. They happen every day."

Considering the volume of testimony directed at such a small group of operators, it would seem only a matter of time before the ENG circus, which involves six TV stations operating citywide, begins to attract more official attention. At present, most ENG operators fly within FAA airspace rules and regs. Nevertheless, "It only takes one ENG helo hovering over the free opera in Central Park to turn thousands of New Yorkers into helicopter opponents," said Matt Zuccarro of the Eastern Regional Helicopter Council (ERHC), a trade organization representing executive and commercial helo operators throughout the region. "The Helicopter Association International's program of 'Fly Neighborly' is good at its central concept, but people soon lose track of it and it's back to flying as usual."

So what's next? Two implacable forces face each other over a supercharged public-use issue in which there is little in the way of compromise: one side wants FAA to manage the public airspace and leave operations alone. The other side wants to hand over the governing of city airspace to the city. This latter faction is growing increasingly militant, especially in the face of what it feels is a betrayal by the Mayor's official master plan, a document they consider a sellout to the rotorcraft interests. It will almost certainly be rejected by the combined city council, leaving New York City no choice but to begin the process all over again. □

The New York Times

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NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1998

\$1 beyond the greater New York met

Page one

Patrols Up in Central Park, Dangerous or Not

By KEVIN FLYNN

Crime spree, real or imagined, in Central Park have always given New York City officials fits.

So it was only slightly odd yesterday to hear Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani defend a heightened police response to a crime wave that officials contend does not exist.

"I think they are responding to the psychology of fear as opposed to the reality of it," the Mayor said at a news conference in the park. "But I never object to doing more about solving crimes or keeping people safer."

Despite some news reports that have warned of a crime wave in the park, all statistical measures show that major felonies are down sharply in Central Park this year compared with the year before, by 23 percent. Even the 11 violent incidents since Sept. 3, while serious and in one case, fatal, are in keeping with the recent pace of incidents in the park, police statistics show.

But when it comes to Central Park, New York City's verdant front lawn, recreational backyard, tourist mecca and wooded haven, cold statistics are often a poor antidote to alarming media reports about crime in the park and the public concern they tend to draw. Crimes that are largely ignored elsewhere in the city, like assault and robbery, are followed with intense scrutiny when they are

committed within the 843-acre Manhattan park.

"It's sort of like the Kennedy family," said Parks Commissioner Henry Stern. "Everyone knows what happens to each member."

So, despite insisting there has been no rise in violence, the Police Department has begun making a show of force in the park in recent weeks. A helicopter often circles overhead at night now, its searchlight panning the ground for signs of suspicious behavior.

Radio cars sweep down park drives at dusk, warning people that officers will be enforcing a 1 A.M. curfew — the Police Department prefers to call it a "closing hour" — that has long been on the books. New lighting is being installed temporarily in the Ramble, a secluded section of the park where several robberies have taken place recently.

"Even if things are not as dangerous as people feel," Mayor Giuliani said, "if they feel that it is, it can have an impact on the quality of life."

Thomas Reppetto of the Citizens Crime Commission said, "Crime can go down 50 percent in a precinct and one high profile crime can wipe out the public perception in a second."

Weeks ago, police officials increased the size of plainclothes and uniformed patrols in the Central Park Precinct and brought in additional detectives from the Manhattan North Precinct, officials said. Overall, the precinct, which usually operates with a patrol strength of 136, has made use of about 20 more officers.

Still, the fear that the police are hoping to assuage was hardly evi-

Continued on Page B8

GO ISLANDERS! FIND OUT THE REAL FACTS about how Nassau County is jeopardizing the team at www.coliseum-coverup.com — ADVT.

H NC P 426

The Metro Section

The New York Times

B1

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1998

East Side Heliport Ceases Operations on Weekends

After 25 years of enduring the clatter of helicopters on weekends, residents of Manhattan's East Side are finally getting a few days of quiet. Prompted by longstanding complaints from residents, the city has ended weekend operations at the East 34th Street Heliport.

The weekend ban, which begins today, is one of several measures to reduce air traffic in the city. The city had already shortened the weekday operating hours at the heliport, which is now open 8 A.M. to 8 P.M., rather than 7 A.M. to 11 P.M.

Last year it closed its other heliport, at East 60th Street, and banned sightseeing flights at the East 34th Street site, which reduced the number of its flights by 60 percent.

"The difference has been dramatic," said City Councilman Andrew S. Eristoff, who represents the neighborhoods near the heliports.

The city is considering other methods of reducing helicopter noise at the East 34th Street Heliport, including the erection of noise barriers around the heliport and financial incentives for pilots who fly quieter aircraft.

The city does not have control over the city's other two heliports. The heliport at West 34th Street is under state control, and the city-owned port at Wall Street has been leased to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey until 2008.

HNC P 421

Money & Business

11

Personal Business

VICARIOUS CONSUMPTION

ROBERT BRYCE

A Grand Entrance, In Your Own Helicopter

COMMUTING by helicopter can be tough. Just ask Harrison Ford, the actor. In September, he wanted to fly his new helicopter to Alexandria, Va., where he was about to begin shooting his latest film, "Random Hearts." But the city had an ordinance banning nonemergency choppers. So he ended up driving instead.

For all the logistical problems, however, helicopter ownership has an unmistakable cachet. After all, is there a better way to show that you have arrived? And the people who own — and fly — their own jet-powered choppers make up a very exclusive list.

"You can count those people on your fingers and toes," said Barry Desfor, who publishes "The Official Helicopter Blue Book," a price and technical specification guide for used helicopters.

He was exaggerating a bit — actually, close to 500 people own the turbine-powered models, according to Air Track, a company in Hilliard, Fla., that keeps ownership data. Even so, that is only 5 percent of the 10,000 helicopters now operating in the United States, of which more than 8,000 are owned by corporations.

Mr. Ford is a recent addition to the group of owner-pilots. Last year, he visited the Fort Worth factory of Bell Helicopter Textron, a unit of Textron, and left with a new single-engine Bell 206. Later, he had it customized with radios and a new paint job. In May, Nick Price, the professional golfer, picked up a faster Bell chopper, a 407. (Another golfer, Greg Norman, flies a twin-engine Bell 430 and has his own private jet.)



In 1982, Ross Perot Jr. was greeted by his father before departing on the first around-the-world helicopter trip. The younger Mr. Perot now flies a Bell 407 chopper, which gives him a bird's-eye view of his real estate holdings in the Fort Worth area.

Cont.

HNC P 422

C O N T.

Avid pilots say nothing can replace the thrill of flying a helicopter. "The performance of these new helicopters is incredible," said H. Ross Perot Jr., animatedly discussing his Bell 407, which has a top speed of 140 knots, or 161 miles an hour.

One of America's most accomplished helicopter pilots, Mr. Perot, the son of the Dallas billionaire and former Presidential candidate, fell in love with helicopters in 1981, when he began flying them to inspect his family's investments in real estate and oil. In 1982, he flew into the record books, too: He and Jay Coburn, a Dallas business executive, became the first pilots to fly around the globe in a helicopter, a feat that took 29 days.

No wonder Mr. Perot is so enthusiastic. Even the zippiest cars cannot compete with a turbine-powered helicopter. The Bell 407 has 674 horsepower and, at 2,598 pounds, weighs about 500 pounds less than a Toyota Camry. (A four-cylinder Camry has 133 horsepower.) One of the fastest single-engine helicopters, the 407 can go from a standing start to more than 100 miles an hour in 58 seconds, all while carrying up to six passengers and a pilot at treetop altitudes.

That kind of performance, however, requires serious money. The 407 has a base price of \$1.3 million, while the less powerful 206 is \$750,000. Avionics, radios and navigation systems that use Global Positioning System technology can add several hundred thousand dollars to those figures. And operating costs for a jet-powered helicopter start at \$200 an hour.

Twin-engine models offer more speed —

and even higher price tags. The sleek, twin-engine AS 365 made by American Eurocopter, based in Grand Prairie, Tex., can carry two pilots and eight passengers and cruise at more 170 miles an hour — all for a mere \$4.6 million. (The base price of the Bell 430 is \$3.7 million.)

Cost, however, may not be the only deterrent to owning a helicopter. According to the Federal Aviation Administration, rotor aircraft are far more accident-prone than fixed-wing aircraft. In 1997, helicopters averaged 9.29 accidents in 100,000 hours of flying, versus a rate of 0.36 in 100,000 for large commercial aircraft.

DESPITE these numbers, Mr. Perot excludes confidence, and for good reason — he has an air transport license, the most advanced certification available to helicopter pilots. He is also certified to fly jet airplanes.

"If you are a helicopter pilot, you have so much freedom and flexibility," Mr. Perot said. "You can take off and land anywhere you feel safe."

Indeed, many of the reasons for choosing a helicopter over, say, a chauffeured limousine, boil down to a single axiom: Time is money.

Mr. Ford's helicopter lets him avoid highway traffic jams, giving him more time on the movie set. And a helicopter gives Mr. Perot, who is involved in land deals around Fort Worth, a bird's-eye view of his real estate holdings that he finds useful in dealing with investors and government officials. "It's a great tool," Mr. Perot said.

Tool or toy, helicopters provide airborne prestige. And there's a better, faster, and of course, more expensive, airship on the designers' screen. Bell is now taking orders for the 609, a smaller civilian version of the V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft that Bell, in

cooperation with Boeing, is building for the Pentagon.

The 609, with a base price of \$8 million, will be able to fly twice as fast and twice as far as today's helicopters. The first 609's will not roll off the assembly line until 2002, but the company has already received deposits from Mr. Norman; H. Wayne Huizenga, the billionaire businessman and sports club owner, and Donald Carter, the Dallas oil man and former owner of the Dallas Mavericks.

Mr. Perot has a 609 on order, too. And he is already thinking about flying it around the world. □

HNC P 423

The New York Times

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1998

A38

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

To the Editor:
How inelegant of folks on the

ground to impede Harrison Ford and other high fliers from cavorting in their helicopters because of local ordinances banning nonemergency choppers (Money & Business, Nov. 22). Should we consider it a privilege to have our sleep disturbed, speech interrupted, air polluted, safety threatened and health imperiled by helicopters so the glorious few can speed their travel and stroke their egos?

Perhaps New York City can protect us from these indignities by enacting a ban on nonemergency helicopters comparable to the ordinance passed in Alexandria, Va.

JOY A. HELD
New York, Nov. 22, 1998

HNC p 424

War in the Skies

Local Congress People Take on Helicopters and Seaplanes
by Dean Paton

First helicopters, now seaplanes.

Upper East Siders who spent years fighting to convince the city to restrict the number of sightseeing and other helicopters buzzing their buildings fear seaplane tourism may make their victory over helicopters a short-lived one.

When the City Council tried to regulate helicopter traffic in New York several years ago, the National Helicopter Association sued in federal court, arguing that authority belonged solely to the Federal Aviation Administration.

The court agreed with the trade group but the city, which owns the land on which all Manhattan heliports are located, used its landlord powers to phase out sightseeing helicopters by 2008. National Helicopter has already lost its lease on the East 60th Street heliport.

"What we need is a no-fly zone," said Joy Held, an East Sider and president of the Helicopter Noise Coalition of New York City, who is also opposed to seaplane tourism.

"They're going to replace one type of aircraft with another," said Held, who feels the industry is just trying to get around the impending restrictions. "They claim it is quiet, but seaplanes are actually louder [than helicopters]."

Art Schneider, chairman of tour company Sea-Air New York, denied that. "It's an airplane, it has to make sound. But an airplane doesn't hover in place, it's not as loud as a helicopter.

"We are not trying to get around any rules," he added. "We realize helicopters can't get down to acceptable noise levels. That's why we are doing this."

"The planes are going to generate about 72 decibels," Schneider said. Pointing to the background noise of a congested city like New York, he added, "We have the same noise level as the rest of the city, it's within an acceptable range. Sixty-five decibels [the level the FAA says is the most desirable] is almost a level you can't get to."

Schneider's decibel number comes from a test flight conducted January 7. A similar study performed at the 34th Street Heliport in 1997 showed a reading of 94 decibels. Every increase of one decibel represents a 20 percent increase in noise volume.

The reason for the spate of complaints over the past few years is less because of the noise of the flights and more because of their growing frequency. East and West Siders living in the 70s and 80s found that

sightseeing helicopters tended to cross the island from one side of the river to the other around that area in order to view Central Park. Some residents complained of flights past their high-rise windows every couple of minutes all day on weekends.

They also say helicopters are unsafe, pointing to a few high-profile accidents like the recent plunge of WNBC-TV's \$4 million Chopper 4 — billed as the "most sophisticated aerial news-gathering machine in the world" — into the Passaic River last December.

As for the charge that this is the latest attempt to work around the city's rules, Schneider pointed out that the existing Sea Air Marina at East 23rd Street on the East River has been in operation since 1923.

Nonetheless, two Manhattan members of Congress have introduced legislation to make it easier for the FAA to regulate any sightseeing craft.

East Side Rep. Carolyn Maloney and West Side Rep. Jerrold Nadler have a bill before congress intended to turn the aviation industry upside down.

Congresswoman Maloney said, "With this bill, the FAA will now have the authority to cut down on the unsafe and noisy helicopters that are chipping away at our quality of life."

The bill in question addresses a much larger issue, said Maggie McDow, a legislative assistant of Maloney's.

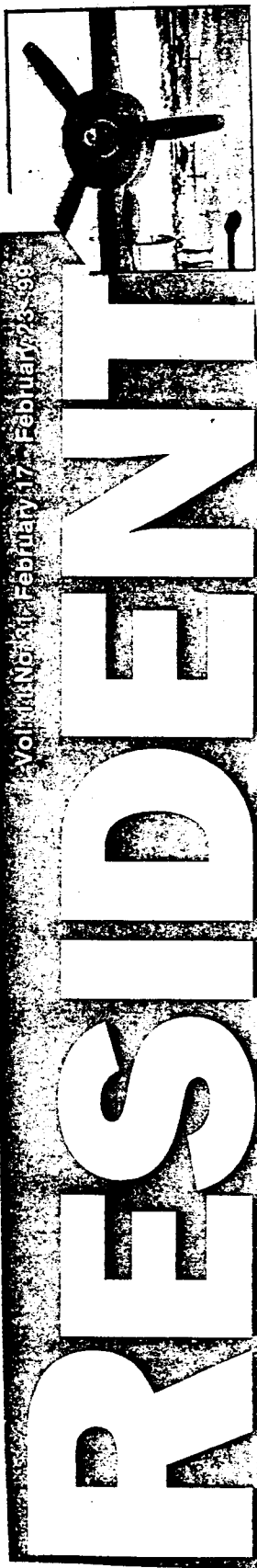
"When the FAA was created, its principal goal was to promote the air industry," McDow said. "Right now the FAA regulations can only apply nationally [rules regarding how high or low, or how often, flights may take place]. This bill would allow them to regulate individual areas."

As Held pointed out, what is needed for "crop dusting in Kansas does not apply to New York, which is the most crowded airspace in the world."

Under Maloney's legislation, "Individual municipalities and states will be able to conduct their own studies and submit them to the FAA. The FAA will have 60 days to respond and the public will have a 90-day public comment period." The FAA will retain final say over the fate of the regulations.

As for acceptable uses in the metropolitan area, Minna Elias, Maloney's chief of staff, said, "Tourist uses are completely unreasonable."

As for Held, noise is the principal issue. "It's the number one complaint to the mayor's hotline. It's everywhere, even when they put you on hold on the telephone." ■



HNC P 425

MARCH 11, 1999

Esprit

EDITORIAL

JUST PLANE WRONG

Helicopters have tormented West Siders for years.

The noisy planes, which fly at all hours, disrupt people's sleep, their conversations and, less tangibly but not less importantly, their peace of mind. Many say they live in fear of a copter crashing into their apartment building, or simply falling out of the sky and onto the densely crowded streets below.

Spurred on by their fears and encouraged by local politicians, neighborhood activists mobilized against the planes in 1997, forming the Helicopter Noise Coalition. In less than two short years, that organization has met with remarkable success in its war against copters. Six months ago, the East 60th Street Heliport was closed permanently; take-offs and landings at the East 34th Street

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EDITORIAL

Just Plane Wrong

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Heliport dropped from 54,000 in 1997 to less than 19,000 last year; all tourist flights will be discontinued at the West 30th Street Heliport by 2001, and at the Downtown Heliport by 2008.

But, even as city heliports are facing increasing restrictions on tourist flights, one local businessman might have found a

way to stay in the air with the seaplane.

Since seaplanes dock in a marina, not a heliport, the regulations banning tourist flights from taking off or landing at city heliports don't apply.

But the objections to helicopters and seaplanes are the same: seaplanes are every bit the accident hazard as choppers and are

only slightly less noisy.

The city had good reasons for discouraging helicopter flights over Manhattan. There is no reason why these policies should not be extended to seaplanes — or any other type of flying transportation.

After all, more than any other city in America, New York is walker-friendly. The tourists that are now flocking to the city in droves hardly need the promise of a sky-high tour to lure them here.

Let them walk — and let city dwellers get some peace. ☐

OVER TOWN

MARCH 25, 1999

46 • OUR TOWN • March 25, 1999

Air Traffic

To the Editor:

I greatly appreciate your coverage of the seaplane and helicopter issues ("Waiting in the Wings," 3/11/99). As a Peter Cooper Village resident, I can testify that the prospect of sightseeing seaplanes is truly horrifying.

I must also say, however, that the situation with the 34th Street Heliport is not as rosy as it is often reported. Thanks in considerable measure to the efforts of Joy Held's Helicopter Noise Coalition, the situation is definitely better than it was a few years ago. Still, there seems to have been a decided increase in traffic over the past two months or so. I am once again being disturbed by flights day and night, seven days a week. I've heard helicopters before 7:30 a.m. and after 10 p.m. Is there a city official responsible for seeing that the new regulations are being observed?

MICHAEL WEBER
PETER COOPER VILLAGE

Hinc p 427

New York Post

June 24, 1998

Residents fume as film chopper buzzes 5th Ave.

By PHILIP MESSING
and BILL SANDERSON

Authorities are investigating whether a helicopter being used in a movie shoot came dangerously close to Fifth Avenue apartment buildings last night.

"It was dangerous and reckless. It was bloody outrageous," said a 40-year-old author who lives in a building on the corner of East 61st Street. "It astounded me. It went on for four hours."

The woman, who asked not to be identified, said the helicopter at one point swooped down Fifth Avenue 20 feet from her balcony and 100 feet above her 15th-floor apartment.

Federal rules require helicopters to fly 2,000 feet laterally from buildings, and at least 500

feet above them.

The woman said the chopper made so much noise, police couldn't hear her when she called to complain.

Joy Held, president of the Helicopter Noise Coalition, saw the craft as she strolled in Central Park.

"It was flying very low, and it was very, very noisy," she said.

Police at the 19th Precinct said they were inundated by complaints as the chopper flew around between 6:30 and 11 p.m.

A police source said a film crew had permission to use a seven-passenger helicopter in a movie shoot from 8:30 to 11 p.m.

It was not immediately known what movie was being filmed.

HNC P 428

Newswe

LINDA TRIPP
She Try to Trap

Now It's ... Barbra Brolin!

IT'S BEEN 35 YEARS SINCE **Barbra Streisand** walked down the aisle (with first husband, Elliott Gould), but last week, at 56, she became Sadie, married lady, again. Finally. After a year of false alarms in the media, the diva and actor **James Brolin**, 57, were



wed in her Malibu, Calif., living room. The ceremony was performed by a rabbi, with about 100 guests looking on, including Tom Hanks, John Travolta, Quincy Jones, designer Donna Karan and First Brother Roger Clinton. Streisand's son, Jason Gould, gave his mom away, and Brolin's son Josh, an actor like his dad, was best man. A buffet dinner was served under a vast white tent that blocked the par-

ty from the view of the media helicopters circling overhead. Looking demure in a white dress by Karan, the bride was nonetheless relentless. She successfully kept the press at bay by aiming heavy metal music and glaring floodlights at them. Wonder what kind of arsenal she's got for the honeymoon.

JEAN SELIGMANN with
SHEHNAZ SUTERWALLA in London

HNC P 429

TRANSPORTATION

Helicopter War Still Soaring

The city's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) recently released a report on helicopters that has some residents ready to fly off the handle.

The report calls on the city to take steps to reduce noise caused by helicopters and to continue to discourage tourist flights, but does not call for the complete ban on non-emergency flights that some residents wanted. The report also leaves open the possibility of building an additional heliport on Pier 76 in the new Hudson River Park.

Some anti-helicopter activists were extremely disappointed that the report did not recommend eliminating non-essential helicopter flights.

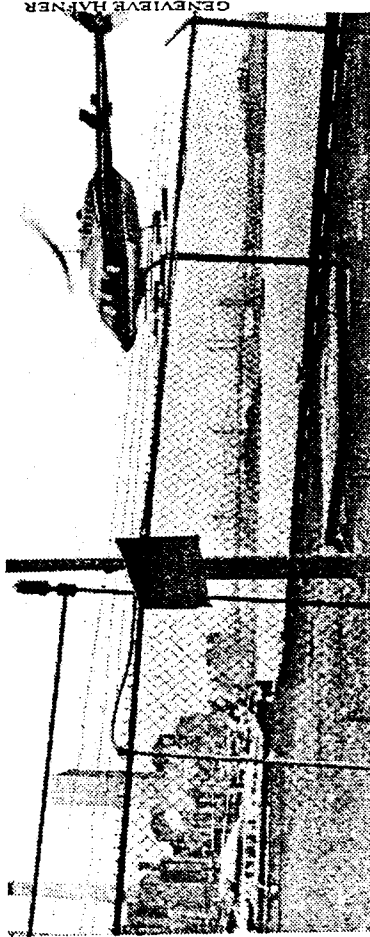
"Just the way the Grand Canyon doesn't want helicopters over wilderness areas, we don't want them where we live," said Joy Held, president of the Helicopter Noise

Coalition, a group dedicated to eliminating all but emergency helicopter flights in Manhattan.

"We are concerned about the noise, air pollution, safety and national security issues," said Held. "They can fly within one inch of the United Nations."

Generally, helicopters using city heliports carry tourists on sightseeing expeditions or transport corporate executives. Many people draw a distinction between tourist flights, considered frivolous, and corporate flights, perceived as vital to the economy.

"Like it or not, helicopters are part of New York City's transit network," said Barry Schneider, chairman of Community Board 8. Schneider, who served on the city's task force on helicopters, helped to shut down the East 60th Street heliport to non-emergency services.



A new city report does not call for banning non-emergency helicopter flights, as some residents had hoped.

Schneider noted that many corporate executives of Fortune 500 companies use helicopters to get them in and out of the city quickly.

Last September, two city heliports — East 34th Street and East 60th Street — stopped allowing tourist flights. The East 60th Street heliport has since closed. The South Street Seaport heliport must continue to allow tourist flights until the year 2008 under an agreement with the federal government. The other Manhattan heliport, located on

West 30th Street, is controlled by the state.

Even if the city and state banned all flights from taking off or landing in Manhattan, federal regulations would still permit helicopters to fly over the city.

The final public hearing on the draft plan will be on Sept. 10. After the hearing, a final plan will be written with the Federal Aviation Administration, said Janell Patterson, spokesperson for the EDC.

— Alexander Dworkowitz

HNC
P430

CORRESPONDENT'S REPORT

Grand Canyon Echoes With the Noise of Planes

By JOHN H. CUSHMAN Jr.

FOR more than 12 years the National Park Service and the Federal Aviation Administration have struggled to control the noise of airplanes carrying tourists over Grand Canyon National Park. But even now, in only about a third of the park is there something approaching natural quiet most of the time, according to Government officials.

And growth in air tourism, they say, is threatening further progress toward the Government's goal of quieting the skies over half the park.

In July, the bureaucracy produced the latest stanza in its regulatory epic, a proposal to put more restrictions on the number of air tours, effectively freezing the flights at recent levels. It also proposed changes to the areas where planes are allowed to fly, making them fly higher over some parts of the park.

For air tour operators, who lost a court challenge to previous F.A.A. rules, the new proposals will significantly impede growth. Industry groups argue that the park is quiet enough, and that Government studies showing otherwise are flawed. To environmentalists, the changes have been a long time coming and will be a welcome hiatus while even tighter restrictions are developed.

Back in 1987, Congress passed a law requiring the agencies to substantially restore natural quiet in Grand Canyon National Park. For almost a decade the Government hemmed and hawed about what to do. Then on Earth Day in 1996, President Clinton ordered the agencies to limit the number of sightseeing aircraft immediately — and to meet the law's demands completely by no later than 2008.

But how quiet is quiet?

At Grand Canyon the rule of thumb adopted by the Government is that the law's requirements are met if in 50 percent of the park no aircraft are audible for at least 75 percent of the day.

For years the F.A.A. has been studying noise in the park. It estimates that today only about 32 percent of the park area has had natural quiet restored (still short of the 50 percent goal). And if no additional action is taken, the agency projects, future growth in air tours will reduce naturally quiet areas to only 25 percent of the park.

The problem, the agency said, is that when it capped the number of planes given permission to fly over the park, it underestimated the total and how many flights these

planes could operate. As a result there is still considerable overcapacity in the region, and with the number of visitors rising over the years, the agency now believes that unless flights, as opposed to aircraft, are limited, the number will continue to grow 3 percent a year and the skies will get noisier for a dozen more years.

While the proposed freeze on flights is in place for the next two years, the agency plans to continue to collect information about noise, and says that even more restrictions may be needed in the future.

The agency says that the two dozen tour operators in the region carry about 600,000 passengers a year. It estimated that over 10 years the operators could lose \$179 million in revenues under its proposal.

Air tour operators have complained for years that the authorities are setting noise limitations far too low to be realistic and that the industry's studies show that natural quiet has already been substantially restored. The park service's past noise studies are flawed, they say, and to freeze flights for two years while more studies are done will not only hurt their business but also deprive tens of thousands of people of the chance to see the canyon.

They call their services an environmentally friendly way to see the park, and a big service to the handicapped and to older visitors. And they say that their industry isn't growing any faster than the numbers of visitors who hike or boat through the canyon.

"This canyon is 280 miles long and 10 miles wide," said Brenda Halvorson, president of Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters. "There is plenty of space for river runners to enjoy it the way they want to, hikers to enjoy it, and air tour users to enjoy it their way. It is a big, big place."

Environmentalists, on the other hand, were encouraged by the latest proposal, though they say the park is still too noisy.

"We have been arguing since the very beginning that they need to cap the number of flights, just as the river has an absolute limit on the number of people who can float down," said Geoffrey Barnard, the president of Grand Canyon Trust, an advocacy group that has been fighting noise in the area since it was founded in 1986.

"There are two and a half to three times as many flights as in 1987," he said. "There are now 88,000 commercial tours per year over the canyon, over 300 flights per day, which constitutes what I would call an aerial carnival over one of the seven wonders of the world, and an intolerable intrusion."

HINC

P431

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES **EDITORIALS/LETTERS** WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1999

The March and the Constitution

The Federal District Court in New York ruled properly yesterday that the city's attempt to prevent the so-called Million Youth March violated the constitutional right to free speech. Instead of appealing to a higher court, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani needs to issue the necessary permits and concentrate on making this a safe and orderly gathering. To escalate the public statements and the legal battle would only inflame racial tensions — and provide the archbigot Khallid Abdul Muhammad with free publicity and a wider audience.

The struggle over the rally is shaping up as a repeat of last year, when the city denied permits and was overruled in court. The United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit set parameters for last year's event, allowing the marchers to assemble for four hours over a distance of six blocks along Malcolm X Boulevard, a space large enough to accommodate many times the 6,000 people who actually showed up.

Although accounts vary, the event might have concluded on a calmer note if the police had not rushed the stage and had a helicopter swoop down over the crowd just as the event was supposed to

end. District Court Judge Denny Chin chided the police for their aggressiveness last year, noting that the use of the helicopter was "excessive." In ruling that this year's rally could go on, but without a parade to the site, the Judge acknowledged that Mr. Muhammad's comments about Jews and whites were "bigoted, hateful, violent and frightening." But he held that a society where free speech could be curtailed "on the basis of administrative whim" was at least as frightening as Mr. Muhammad's bigotry.

Mayor Giuliani wants to prove that he remains a tough enforcer of the law as he heads into his run for the Senate. Also, it is understandable that many citizens might want the Mayor to shut down a rally that is apt to be filled with racist venom. But New York City has a powerful tradition of tolerance for free speech, even when it is hateful. By hyping this march beyond its importance Mr. Giuliani will only increase the turnout. The best approach is to starve Mr. Muhammad of public attention, cover the march with an adequate but restrained police presence and let his "movement," such as it is, collapse of its own spiritual emptiness.

HNC p 432

In Alaska, Helicopters Alarm Environmentalists

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1999

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HWC
P
433

By EDWIN McDOWELL

WHEN the United States Forest Service issued a permit in 1984 for the first commercial helicopter to land tourists on the Juneau Ice Field, it limited the landings to 400. Today four helicopter companies are allowed a total of 19,039 landings a year on the 100-mile-long ice field, and have petitioned for twice that. They also want to land at two of the ice field's 10 zones that were declared off limits to helicopters in 1987.

Whether the helicopter companies get their wish will depend on regulations that emerge from passage of a Forest Service environmental-impact study that is now in the draft stage. The final version is scheduled to go into effect for five years after the current five-year regulations expire at the end of this year. At issue are arguments about noise pollution, the impact of helicopters on mountain goats and other animals, access to public land on the ice field and, most recently, air safety.

That last issue arose on June 9, when a sightseeing helicopter belonging to Coastal Helicopters crashed on Herbert Glacier on



Mark Kelley

Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau.

the ice field, about 20 minutes north of Juneau, killing the pilot and all six passengers.

The National Transportation Safety Board is still investigating, and so far the pilot does not appear to have violated any flight regulations. And while the crash is thought to have been the first of a sightseeing helicopter on an ice field (a tourist was killed when a helicopter collided with a small plane over Juneau last year), the accident has sharpened the underlying differences between environmentalists, who are adamant about preserving Alaska's remaining wilderness, and those who believe that the future of Juneau and other Alaskan cities depends to a large extent on tourism.

John Mazor, president of the Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau, defends the proposed increase in helicopter landings as vital to the economic future of Juneau, the landlocked Alaska capital of 30,000 residents. "Ten years ago Juneau had twice as many government jobs as jobs in the private sector," he said, "while today there are about 9,200 private sector jobs and 6,100 government jobs." That turnabout, he said,

is a result of shrinking oil reserves in Alaska, which forced cutbacks in government employment, and a rapidly expanding private-sector tourist industry.

"A decade ago we probably had 150,000 cruise ship passengers stop in Juneau during the summer," Mr. Mazor said. "Now it's about 590,000." Those visitors, who are in port for less than a day, account for most of the estimated \$75 million annually that Juneau business earns from tourist expenditures at restaurants and stores, and on such tours as excursions to a fish hatchery or to Mendenhall Glacier — and helicopter sightseeing. (They may soon account for even more of Juneau's revenue if the city adopts a head tax of \$5 a passenger — as it is expected to Oct. 5 — in retaliation for the dumping of pollutants in Alaskan waters by the Royal Caribbean International cruise line.)

The briefest helicopter tour takes about 30 minutes, includes a landing on a glacier long enough for passengers to walk around, and costs about \$125 a person. The 60- to 90-minute tours, which average \$150 to \$200 a person, stop at two glaciers; at each stop the pilot shuts the engine and leads passengers on a short walk.

Two helicopter companies combine glacier sightseeing with a half-hour dog-sled trip. One company drops off passengers, who trek across the ice field for an hour or two with a guide to a pickup point.

And the Forest Service has received requests for tours that feature ski planes, off-road vehicles, overnight trekking, hut-to-hut guided tours, cross-country skiing, snowmobiles, and a combination of float planes and helicopters — as well as for tours of mining claims combined with glaciers.

Not surprisingly, the Sierra Club looks askance at any increase in helicopter landings or any opening of other areas of the Juneau ice field to aircraft.

"We want helicopter landings kept at their present levels," said Richard Hellard, who is chairman of the conservation committee of the Sierra Club in Alaska. "We're particularly concerned about quiet in the back country, because it destroys the wilderness experience that people are seeking. And what happens to our community by the constant roar of helicopters taking off and landing?"

The Sierra Club is not opposed to tourism, Mr. Hellard said, only unrestrained tourism. "We want a Juneau that 20 years from now is still a place where people want to visit, not a depleted wilderness reserve or a tourist trap."

Mr. Mazor wants the same things, he said, but doesn't want Juneau residents having to choose between eliminating essential city services, or — in a state that has neither a sales tax nor income tax — finding other income sources. "So it comes down to whether we can put up with four months of tourism, including helicopter flights, for the tremendous benefits we receive in return," he said.

Mr. Hellard does not fundamentally disagree. "But what we need to know, and what nobody's talking about, is, How much is enough? How much is too much?" he said. "So far, nobody on the other side's even raising those questions, much less trying to answer them."

Neighborhood Report

U P P E R M A N H A T T A N

It's a Plane, It's a Noise, It's a Bother and Then Some

Charlotte Russell has a wellspring of comparisons, none too pleasant, for the low-flying commercial airplanes that rattle the windows of the Washington Heights apartment where she has lived for 35 years.

"It's like Chinese water torture waiting for the next one to come," said Ms. Russell, 72, pointing out that flights had increased sharply several months ago over her building, on West 185th Street in the Castle Village development near the George Washington Bridge.

"A few weeks ago at about 7:30 A.M., they were flying about every three minutes over us full throttle, flying low," said Ms. Russell, who is a biochemistry professor at City College. She said that she and her neighbors had called a special phone number of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the three major local airports, to complain about the low-flying planes, but had received no response.

Noise from the planes, she said, is even worse than that from helicopters that hover over the bridge each day to provide broadcast traffic information.

"That blast of noise is like being right on the tarmac," she said. "It's an environmental hazard and a shock to the nervous system."

She is not alone. Many upper Manhattan residents say they have been looking sky-

ward lately, baffled by an increase in the amount of commercial jets flying over their neighborhoods on weekends.

A Port Authority spokesman, Peter Yerkes, confirmed their suspicions. Planes landing at La Guardia Airport have been rerouted on weekends because of runway construction, he said.

Runway 22-4, which runs north-south, has

'It's an environmental hazard and a shock to the nervous system.'

been closed on weekends since mid-May, so planes have been using Runway 13-31, the east-west runway, from midnight Friday to 6 A.M. Monday, he said.

"There has been no net increase in aircraft using the airport," Mr. Yerkes added. He said the project, begun in May, would continue until mid-October.

A spokeswoman for the Federal Aviation Administration, Arlene Salac, said the flight patterns of arriving planes had been

changed to accommodate the single runway. "In order to come to land, they fly over the Hudson River and cross over northern Central Park," Ms. Salac said. "That's why the folks up in Harlem area are seeing more traffic."

A Councilman for East Harlem, William Perkins, joked that he and other local residents had resorted to counting planes to make the best of it. "I was sitting in a friend's house and in a five-minute period, we counted about 10 of them," he said.

Angelita Ortega, who lives on East 128th Street, called the noisy weekend flights overhead "very annoying and very disruptive."

"I was shocked when they first started," she said. "I didn't think it would be a permanent thing, but it hasn't stopped."

"Everyone comes through here," she said. "It's the worst in the summer, when everything's open. On Saturday and Sunday, we sit out in the yard, we count them."

But not everyone hates them. Lars Westvind, an artist, said the planes had a soothing effect, especially when he paints in the backyard of his East 130th Street home.

"We're right on the flight line," he said. "It depends on the weather — when it's cloudy they fly very low. But my wife and I enjoy watching them. They're not so loud."

COREY KILGANNON

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In America

BOB HERBERT

An Insult to Harlem

In the end the ordinary people of Harlem proved to be smarter and far more responsible than either Khalid Muhammad or Rudolph Giuliani.

Both men are provocateurs and both were spoiling for a fight on Saturday. Mr. Muhammad did his usual number on whites and Jews. And he wrapped up his ugly speech by urging his listeners, if attacked, to retaliate by treating the police the way some officers in Brooklyn treated Abner Louima.

Mr. Giuliani, who is supposed to be the Mayor of the entire city, abused the power of his office by turning a large section of Harlem into a police encampment. By doing that he humiliated thousands of perfectly peaceful and law-abiding residents whose only offense was that they are black.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the riot. The people kept their heads. They never bought into the hateful rhetoric spewed by a succession of clowns from the speakers' platform. And they refused, despite feeling bitter and hurt, to lash out at the police officers who showed up by the thousands on Saturday morning and locked down the neighborhood.

The cops came ready for war. Residents who emerged from their apartments and brownstones at the start of a beautiful holiday weekend were greeted by an army of police officers who had arrived with helicopters, horses, tractor-trailer trucks, buses, cars, vans and motorcycles. Police barricades seemed to go up everywhere. Subway stations were shut down, their entrances blocked by yellow tape that read: "Police line — do not cross."

"I think it's terrible," said Debra Morrison, who belongs to a community group called the Harlem Gateway Committee. "It's like they want trouble."

Dozens of blocks surrounding the site of the afternoon rally were closed off. People attempting to go to the rally were treated perversely. The police would tell them they could approach the site from, say, 123d Street. The people would walk to 123d, only to be told they would have to go down to 119th. There they would find that 119th was closed, etc.

"Why are they doing this?" a woman asked me. She was on the verge of tears.

Another woman said, "I'm trying to get to my church, but they won't let me." A woman beside her said, "I'm trying to go home."

A man who walked away from one of the barricades said, in obvious frustration: "I can't let it get the best of me. They treat us like we're all criminals."

Many people were upset. But they did not hassle the officers posted at the barricades. And the officers, for the most part, treated the people respectfully. A cop, who asked that his name not be used, said to me: "You know where the orders are coming from. The people are fine."

Giuliani's police encampment.

Not one problem. But I have to follow my orders."

Rudolph Giuliani would never, but never, treat an entire neighborhood of white people the way he treated the people in the vicinity of Lenox Avenue on Saturday. The so-called Million Youth March was a failure in the sense that only a few thousand people showed up, and very few of them were teen-agers. Mr. Muhammad's message of hate was soundly rejected by young black people.

But Mr. Giuliani, by deploying his police as if all black people were a mortal threat, succeeded in intensifying the opposition among blacks toward him and his policy of police overkill. The anti-Giuliani feeling among black people in this city is overwhelming and growing.

There was no need to have helicopters swooping down and buzzing the rooftops on Lenox Avenue on Saturday. This was Harlem, not Vietnam. There was no need for cops in riot gear to storm a rally that was ending. The rally had certainly been repugnant, but it was neither violent nor illegal. The threat to the peace came from Mr. Giuliani's police.

The Mayor is playing with fire. He may feel that it is in his political interest to keep beating up on black people. It may help him as he does his little dance in front of Republican groups around the country that had no use for black people to begin with. But it is not in the city's interest. Black New Yorkers are fed up with Mr. Giuliani's abuse and contempt. He seems not to care, which insures that a bad situation will only get worse.

ie Experts *y the Rules* *On Rallies* *Were Ignored*

By MIKE ALLEN

Several experts on riot control criticized the Police Department yesterday, saying it appeared to have moved too swiftly to end a rally for black youths in Harlem on Saturday, and seemed to have forgotten some of the lessons learned from disturbances over the last 30 years.

Though one expert defended the police action as a way to prevent matters from getting out of hand, others said the haste in shutting down the rally, known as the Million Youth March, was a sharp break from the past practice of the department, which is known for its smooth handling of massive demonstrations.

As Saturday's ralliers began to disband, a police helicopter began making passes over the crowd and officers in riot helmets stormed the stage from behind. Soon bottles, barricades and trash baskets were flying, leaving one person in the crowd and about 15 officers injured.

"From the beginning, it seemed clear the Mayor and police wanted to make a point," said David H. Bayley, dean of the School of Criminal Justice at the State University of New York at Albany. "This looks more like politics than tactics."

Anthony V. Bouza, who was the department's commander in Harlem in the early 1970's, said he was shocked by the swift police surge and believes that the police "owe the black community an apology."

"You're dealing with people — not terrorists," said Mr. Bouza, who is now retired and lives on Cape Cod, Mass. "The police have to remember that they're fighting for the minds and hearts of onlookers. This confirms the black community's sense that the police are an army of occupation in the ghetto. It's nuts."

Mr. Bouza recalled that as a police intelligence officer, he spent nearly every Saturday afternoon from 1957 to 1965 listening to Malcolm X and other black nationalists speak on 125th Street. "The one thing that we learned from all the riots of the 1960's was the need to negotiate, to mediate, to be patient," he said.

But Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani said the police had acted commendably at what "promised to be a much worse event, a really violent event." He said the rally's chief organizer,

THE NEW YORK TIMES **METRO** MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1998

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CONFRONTATION IN HARLEM: Conflicting Views

ers, who retaliated by flinging rocks and smashing windows, according to news accounts at the time. After those disturbances and the Stonewall Inn riot by gay rights advocates in 1969, the police began intensive training in crowd control and sensitivity. Former department officials also said the department had concluded after a disturbance in Tompkins Square Park in 1988 that the use of a helicopter tends to alarm crowds.

Prof. Lawrence W. Sherman, chairman of the department of criminology at the University of Maryland in College Park and a former civilian research analyst for the New York Police Department, said the show of force indicated that Mr. Giuliani was extending his "zero tolerance" philosophy of crime fighting to cover crowd control.

"From the 1970's into the early 90's, the philosophy of the New York Police Department was to negotiate itself out of confrontations," Professor Sherman said. "To have this happen on a hot summer afternoon in Harlem is a real sea change from the riot-prevention philosophy of earlier decades."

But Robert J. Loudon, director of the Criminal Justice Center at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice in Manhattan, said he viewed the police action as a pre-emptive effort to "blitz them before they did anything worse."

"If it had gotten out of hand, it could have been more disastrous, with gunfire, injury and death," he said. "A point has to be made: 'We, the police, will abide by the orders of the court.'"

Two former department officials said none of the provocations cited by police officials justified the action.

One former commander who requested anonymity, saying he feared that Mr. Giuliani would retaliate against friends who are still in the department, said he had "never heard of a protest being stopped right on a dime."

"We always said, 'O.K., folks, we're going to wrap it up now.'"

Several experts said the department had learned during disturbances at Columbia University in 1968 that a massive show of force can be counterproductive. Waves of officers kicked and punched student protesters.

Khalid Abdul Muhammad, deliberately began his speech just before the rally's court-ordered ending at 4 P.M. "He wanted to create a disturbance," the Mayor said. "The police kept that to a minimum, and they did something for which we should be very proud of them."

The Mayor had repeatedly vowed that at 4, the police would begin treating the gathering as an illegal demonstration.

At 4:03, the blue police helicopter swooped low over the crowd, estimated by the police at 6,000. The crowd roared back at the buzzing chopper, with hundreds of people shaking their fists at the show of force. Then officers in riot gear moved onto the stage.

When the choppers and billy clubs flew, many participants said their anger at the establishment had been vindicated. "The Mayor of New York City is making the same mistake Bull Connor made," said James Anthony Barr, 30, a telemarketer from Trenton, referring to the police commissioner in Birmingham, Ala., whose bullying helped galvanize civil rights demonstrators in 1963.

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The Metro Section

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1998

The New York Times

Misunderstandings Led to Melee at Rally in Harlem

The following article was reported by Dan Barry, David M. Halbfinger and Kit R. Roane and was written by Mr. Barry and Mr. Halbfinger.

From out of a cloudless blue sky came the police helicopter, flying low enough for the thousands gathered on a central Harlem thoroughfare to hear the chop-chop of its whirling propellers. What it represented depended on where you stood.

To the many police officers assigned to monitor and control a youth rally organized by a black nationalist with an anti-white message, the helicopter was a planned diversion, allowing officers to move toward cutting the sound system's power while others looked skyward — a signal to end the rally.

But to the event's organizers, and to many of the several thousand spectators, it presented both a threat and an aggressive reminder that the Giuliani administration and its police force were ultimately in charge.

Throughout the Sept. 5 rally, in fact, words and actions were interpreted in strikingly different ways, prompting antagonis-

tic and sometimes violent responses.

Here is but one example: The police officers who approached the sound system's generator wore helmets and face shields, distinguishing them from other officers on the scene. The spectators saw those outfits as riot gear, suggesting that a police offensive was imminent. But to a deputy police commissioner, the helmets were merely "protective gear," precautionary accessories justified by the hateful rhetoric and anti-police bravado used in the days preceding the rally by its organizer, Khalid Abdul Muhammad.

The rally ended in a brief but furious melee, but its aftershocks have led to at least one investigation and worsened what was already a tenuous relationship between the Giuliani administration and the city's black population.

Last week, several black elected officials, while denouncing Mr. Muhammad, nevertheless requested a meeting with Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani to discuss what they considered to be an overreaction by the

Continued on Page 51



Angel Franco/The New York Times

A police helicopter at the Sept. 5 youth rally meant different things to each side.

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A Series of Misunderstandings Led to a Melee at a Youth Rally in Harlem

Continued From Page 49

police. The Mayor refused. Although not as violent as the Tompkins Square Park riot in 1968 or other clashes between crowds and the police, the scuffle has nevertheless hardened into two conflicting and somewhat exaggerated memories. City officials remember the police responding to violence with extraordinary restraint, while organizers and some in the crowd recall the police provoking violence by using unnecessary force.

The Police Department quickly recognized the need to publicize its version of events, and summoned reporters just hours after the rally to view a videotape of the scuffle. But on the advice of the department's lawyers, police officials chose instead to show footage of Mr. Muhammad's anti-police remarks to justify their action.

In the days after the event, the Mayor provided various defenses for the police action, from adherence to an agreed-upon deadline for the rally's end to Mr. Muhammad's provocative rhetoric. But on Tuesday, police officials and the Mayor began emphasizing that the violence had preceded the move to the stage. Finally, on Wednesday, the police shared tape of the scuffle to counter inaccurate reports — in The New York Times and elsewhere — that the brief violence had occurred only after the police had taken the stage.

The two-minute tape showed that the violence began well before the police took the stage, and reflected restraint on the part of several officers being pelted with chairs and other objects. But the tape did not show what precipitated the clash.

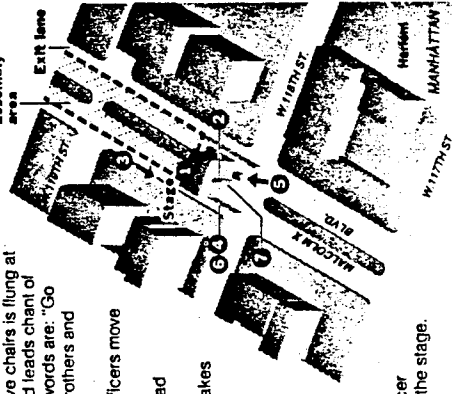
Each Side Sees And Hears the Worst

An analysis of videotapes, radio broadcasts and eyewitness accounts shows how in an atmosphere of mutual distrust, four factors — all occurring in rapid succession — caused the event to explode in conflict just when it seemed to be nearing a peaceful end: the appearance of the helicopter; the tossing of a chair at officers; the closing words of Mr. Muhammad, alternately inflammatory and calming; and the phalanx of officers making for the general just behind the stage — all taking place within one minute, at 4:04 P.M. In the end, it appears that both sides expected a confrontation, leav-

WHAT HAPPENED

The Critical Minutes

- 3:54-27 P.M.:** Malik Z. Shabazz introduces Khalil Abdul Muhammad, the rally's organizer and final speaker, saying, "They say we got to stop at 4 o'clock, we say, 'Hell no!'"
- 3:57-39:** Mr. Muhammad tells the crowd, "If anyone attacks you, already decide who will be the one to disconnect the railing where you are and beat the hell out of them with the railing."
- 3:58-48:** Mr. Shabazz, a lawyer for the rally, leaves the stage to talk to police officials, returning moments later.
- 4:01-43:** "They're trying to shut it down on the back!" Mr. Muhammad shouts. He urges the police to back up, and says, "We will leave in black love and unity."
- 4:02-51:** Mr. Muhammad tells the crowd to go home peacefully.
- 4:04-09:** Helicopter swoops down over the stage.
- 4:04-23:** First of five chairs is flung at police as Mr. Muhammad leads chant of "Black power!" His last words are: "Go home to your families, brothers and sisters."
- 4:04-28:** Police officers move toward generator.
- 4:04-45:** Mr. Muhammad leaves the stage.
- 4:04-51:** Helicopter makes second pass.
- 4:04-56:** Police cut generator power.
- 4:05-54:** People in crowd hold metal barrier aloft, pushing it at police officers.
- 4:06-19:** First officer climbs the rear stairs to the stage.



The New York Times Source: Peoples Video Network, New York 1. WNCN-AM, New York City Police Department

scalp and that "it just needs a Jew hat."

Mr. Muhammad was scheduled to speak at 3:30. But by 3:42, a singer from Atlanta was lip-synching to a reggae song about ending "our slavery mentality." And the master of ceremonies, a close aide of Mr. Muhammad's named Malik Z. Shabazz, was becoming visibly agitated. He cut her off at 3:44. With five more speakers to go before Mr. Muhammad, Mr. Shabazz began urging each one to be brief, occasionally tapping them on the shoulders.

Mr. Shabazz's concerns were well founded: the police were everywhere, some 1,600 around the rally, another 1,600 in reserve, including dozens on horseback. The organizers

later said they knew that they were running out of time, but thought that city officials had agreed to grant them a grace period of 10 minutes or so after 4 P.M.

"Some downplay time," Michael Warren, a lawyer for the organizers, called it. "So that people can leave the area in a peaceful manner."

Police officials adamantly disagree. "They knew that from the get-go, that at 4 o'clock it was over," Chief Scanlon said.

In fact, Chief Scanlon said that about 3:45, he met behind the stage with organizers, who promised that they would be finished by 4. He asked that they demonstrate their good faith by moving people away from the orange-painted generator. Instead, he said, they "reinforced it with large numbers of people."

A Shout: 'They Got The Army Coming!'

A high-ranking police official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the perception that the generator was being fortified provoked Chief Scanlon to respond in kind. Soon formations of helmeted police officers could be seen massing a half-block south of the stage.

Mr. Kelleher explained the need for a prompt shutdown of the generator this way: "Speakers were still in proximity of the microphone."

A woman with a bullhorn worked her way through the crowd, shouting, "They got the Army coming!" Someone on stage also alerted Mr. Muhammad. He walked to the east end of the stage, peered around the curtain, and saw the solemn contingent.

At 3:54, Mr. Shabazz retrieved the microphone to report the status of police negotiations over time. "They say we got to stop at 4 o'clock," he shouted. "We say, 'Hell no!'" He then introduced the keynote speaker.

One minute after accepting the microphone, Mr. Muhammad began his attack on the police. "If you will look around you, you will see that they have lined up all in the trenches," he said, adding that "if anyone attacks you, already decide who will be the one to disconnect the railing where you are and beat the hell out of them with the railing where you are."

At 3:58, Mr. Shabazz left to talk with a cluster of police officials gathered several yards behind the stage, while Mr. Muhammad launched into his now-familiar attack on "blood-sucking Jews." The aide returned moments later to whisper into Mr. Muhammad's ear. "What's up?" the

speaker asked. Mr. Shabazz's report, Mr. Scanlon said, turned back to the crowd. "They're trying to shut it down on the back!" he shouted at 4:01, urging the police to back up, and "we will leave in black love and unity."

"But get the hell out of the way, and let our people go," he added.

By 4:04, Mr. Muhammad had tempered his taunts somewhat to urge people to go home in peace, and was promising to stage another rally next year — in a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn — when his eyes glanced up to see the approaching police helicopter, which a police official later described as a diversionary tactic.

Immediately, he began shouting, "Black power!"

Meanwhile, behind the stage, people in the crowd were reacting differently to the helicopter overhead and to the helmeted police who were now moving north from the 118th Street intersection, toward the generator — and the back of the stage.

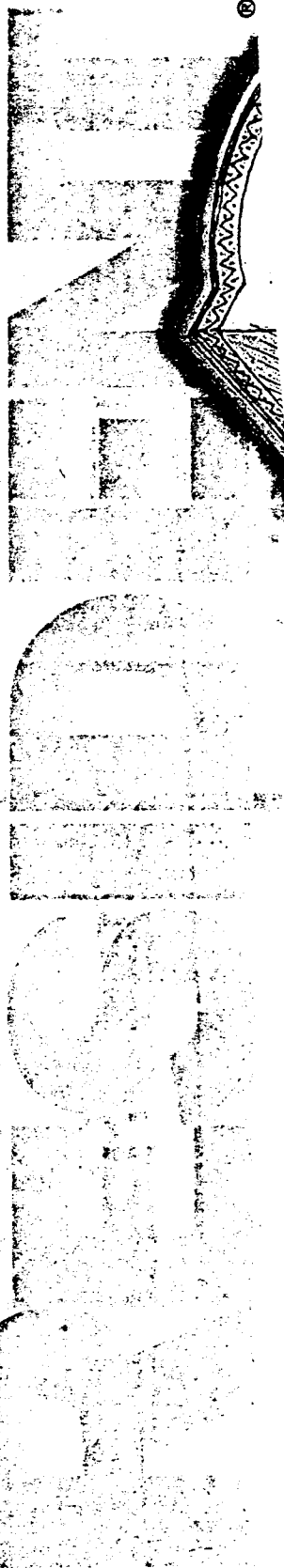
Suddenly, someone picked up a metal folding chair and hurled it at the officers, even as Mr. Muhammad uttered his last syllable — "Go home to your families, brothers and sisters" — and turned to walk off the stage.

In the next 10 seconds, two garbage pails, a black flag, an orange traffic cone and another chair went flying at the police, as a group of officers made for the generator. Twelve seconds later, an officer squirted pepper spray at a man atop the southeast corner of the stage, while Mr. Muhammad calmly walked down the steps a few feet away. A second helicopter buzzed overhead, just as officers reached the generator and shut it down.

Now it was 4:05, and a battle line had formed, with the police, directly behind the stage, facing the crowd, along the west side of the street. A security aide to Mr. Muhammad gestured with palms out, urging officers to "calm down." But outside his view, another chair came flying at the police from around the west side of the stage. And another. And another.

By 4:08, the crowd along the west sidewalk had lifted a metal barrier in the air, then a second one, flipped them upside-down and made as if to throw them at the police. Officers rushed forward to wrestle the barriers away.

A few seconds later, the first of many police officers climbed the stairs leading to the stage. By that time, Mr. Muhammad was already gone. The police say they last saw him climbing into a luxury car.



Grounded

Another Heliport to Close as City Continues Crackdown on Copters

After years of battles over noisy helicopter tourism, the city last week released a master plan that calls for more bans on sightseeing and the closure of a second heliport.

The West Side Heliport on West 30th Street will almost certainly not have its lease renewed in 2001, because of environmental restrictions placed on the Hudson River Park. The East 60th Street heliport was closed last February and the East 34th Street heliport ceased weekend operations this month.

The 900-page master plan's recommendations were never really in any doubt, as the Giuliani administration has come out strongly against the helicopters. Residents of high-rise buildings across Manhattan said that at the height of sightseeing three years ago, helicopters would buzz past their homes as often as every two minutes.

The city cannot regulate the flights directly, as that is the purview of the Federal Aviation Administration. But they can and have used landlord powers over the heliports to force operators to stop flying sightseeing tours.

The plan calls for a continued ban on sightseeing, excluding flights that take off from the Downtown Manhattan Heli-

port, where a federal grant prevents a ban until 2008.

The plan also announced that an independent consultant hired by the city found no safety violations at any Manhattan heliport.

H-NC P 440

ALL THE WHIRLY'S HIS STAGE

Talk about having trouble getting your message across.

Being vice president isn't exactly helping **Al Gore's** presidential campaign. Look what happened when he came to New York Monday night to give an informal speech.

The veep was all set to speak in the garden of **Tina Brown's** East Side apartment. But just when he got up to address his remarks to a crowd that included **Walter Isaacson, David Westin, Barbara Walters** and **Henry Kravis**, all that could be heard was the whirling of helicopters flying over the building to ensure the area was secure for Gore.

And that's not all. The sound system did not seem to be working too well, either. Still, Gore soldiered on.

"There was a problem with the amplification, which was made worse by the helicopter hovering overhead," said **Michael Douglas**, who brought his girlfriend, **Catherine Zeta-Jones**, to the event.

Even though Douglas could hardly hear what the vice president was saying, "I'm an Al Gore supporter," he said. "I like **Bill Bradley**, too. But I give Gore the nod because of his experience."

One person who couldn't be drowned out there was **Nell Campbell**, owner of the club Nell's on W. 14th St. On her way out of Brown's apartment, Campbell turned to Gore and said, "Darling, one last thought before I go. Ban firearms, legalize drugs and, by the way, best of luck to you, darling."

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The New York Times

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1999

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

A30

Helicopter Havoc

To the Editor:

Noise from unregulated helicopters puts everyone at risk of sleep interruptions, disrupted conversations, illnesses and an inability to work or enjoy our homes and parks (news article, Nov. 28). News helicopters are a significant offender. Whether cruising all day looking for a story, hovering at low altitudes, circling for hours or "stacking" above an event, their presence suggests that people on the ground don't matter.

Regulation or even pooling coverage is not the answer. What we need is a ban on nonemergency helicopters in New York City airspace so that residents can get some peace. While we can survive without aerial news shots, we cannot live with intrusive helicopters.

JOY A. HELD

New York, Nov. 30, 1999

The writer is president of the Helicopter Noise Coalition.

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By CHRISENA COLEMAN
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

A New York-based environmental group released a study yesterday that concluded helicopter noise in the city is linked to health problems.

In its 57-page report, the Natural Resources Defense Council said the type of noise caused by helicopters is linked to serious health problems in New Yorkers, including cardiovascular and sleep disorders, anxiety and impaired learning ability in children.

According to the study, titled "Needless Noise: The Negative Impacts of Helicopter Traffic in New York City and the Tri-State Region," there are not enough regulations in place to monitor helicopter noise, and it is putting the health of New Yorkers at risk.

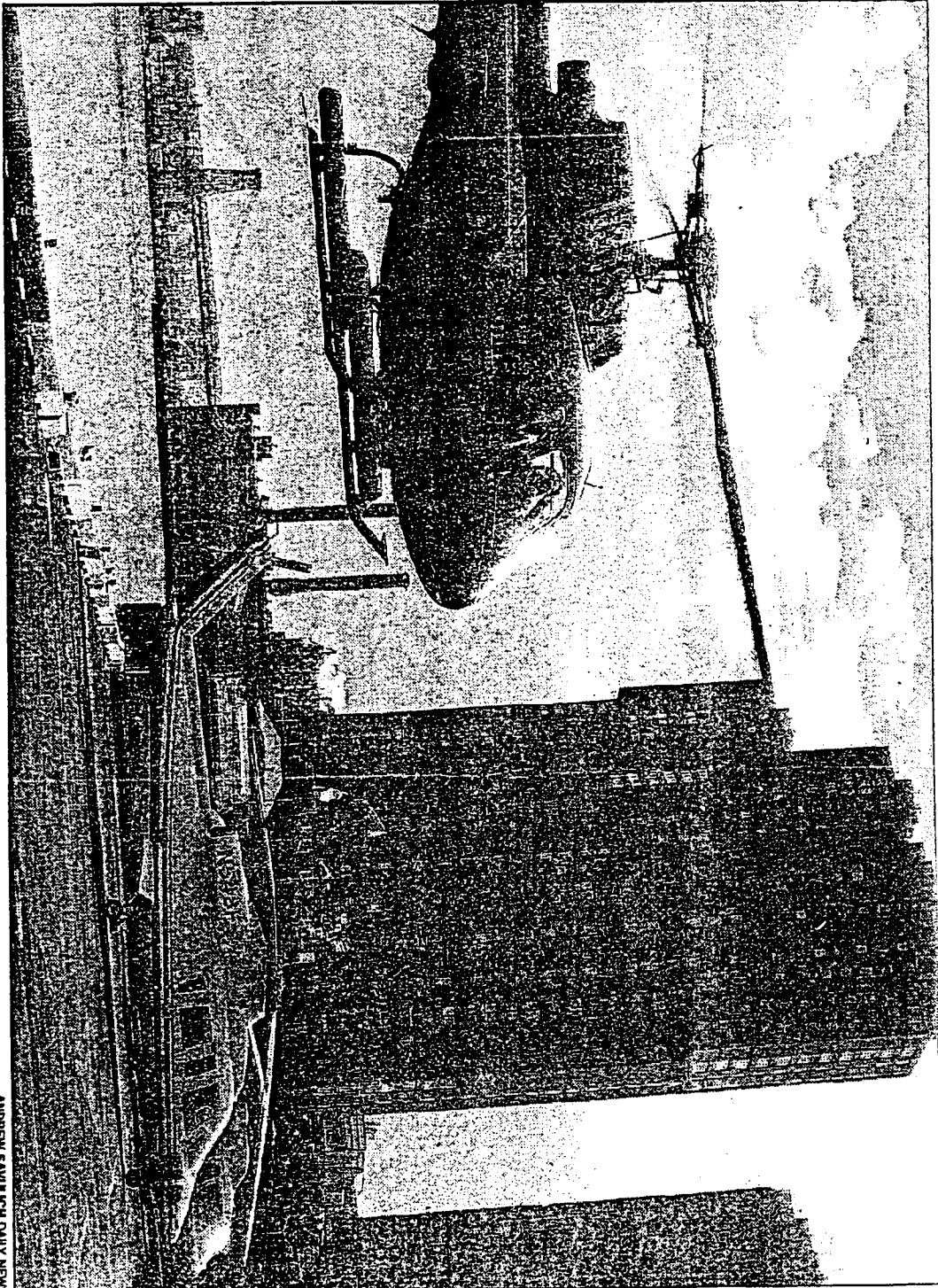
"We found out that helicopters are very underregulated," said council spokeswoman Carolyn Cunningham, who wrote the report. "New York City has the highest helicopter traffic in the country, and the residents are severely impacted."

The report says there are no emission standards for helicopter engines and that their emissions go unabated and uncontrolled.

Council officials said the city should work toward decreasing the city's sightseeing helicopter flights and eventually ban them, because they are not necessary and are bad for the environment.

"New York City is the most heavily helicopter-trafficked area in the country, with more than 140,000 flights yearly during the 1990s," said Richard Kasel of the resources defense group. "Clearly, now is the time for the city and the individual heliports to decrease noise and protect the public."

The mayor's office today is expected to set up a heliporter



ANDREW SAVILICH/DAILY NEWS

EARACHE

Helicopters landing at the East River Heliport at 34th St. are one source of numerous noise complaints by neighbors.

task force to look into the matter. But the environmental group said the city's helicopter use master plan, released in the fall, understates the effects of increased numbers of helicopter overflights on the environment and public health. The group urged city officials to decrease the helicopter noise in an effort to protect the public.

Cunningham said the Council had done two studies about airport pollution in the area but did

not look at helicopters. However, there were noise complaints on record from residents who did not like helicopters in their neighborhood, which prompted the latest study.

She said helicopters are not being forced to comply with noise and pollution regulations. The council said there is no provision in the Clean Air Act regulating pollution from aircraft.

"There is an urgent need for noise relief," said Cunningham.

"Helicopter noise is annoying because of blade slap and low-frequency noise that results in building vibration."

She said residents also should be concerned about potentially harmful toxins released into the air by helicopters.

City Councilwoman Christine Quinn (D-Chelsea) said she has received all sorts of complaints from constituents about helicopter noise.

"Helicopter noise is an annoyance problem in my district," said Quinn. "It is one of the chief complaints that I have heard since I took office. The noise is keeping their children up at night and causing their buildings to vibrate."

She said the industry has not been regulated but that she hopes the situation will be rectified.

"This report is enormously helpful to me," she said. "It further proves what people have been telling me all along."

The New York Times

NEW YORK, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2000

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

A18

Make Rules for Copters

To the Editor:

Re "Rich Brazilians Rise Above Rush-Hour Jams" (São Paulo Journal, Feb. 15), about the increased use of private helicopters in Brazil:

The United States is also seeing a disturbing increase in the use of helicopters to bypass conventional ground transportation. And no one controls helicopters. A truck can't idle for more than three minutes on a New York City street, but helicopters may fly anywhere, at any hour, hovering as long and as low as they desire. That is why many New Yorkers suffer from the growing swirl of corporate, sightseeing and media helicopters.

Fortunately, high crime rates aren't driving more New Yorkers to the sky. But until strict legislation is enacted, helicopter use will increasingly affect the lives of the city's residents.

COLLEEN CARON

New York, Feb. 17, 2000

HNC p 444

composer John Cage responded. He sent Hempton a steady stream of cryptic notes, including one that read, "Fear is one of the seven essential emotions."

"I never knew what he was talking about, but it didn't matter," says Hempton. "The message was that John Cage was writing to me. At a time when everyone else was telling me to get on with my life, John Cage thought my work was important."

After hiking out of the Hoh Rainforest with the elks' daybreak chorale on tape, Hempton eases Fritz into a padded pouch and repacks his gear. His pace is leisurely, almost puttering, and the intensity has faded from his eyes. At 47, Hempton seems born to his field uniform of Tevas, khaki shirt, and "miracle shorts"—cotton cutoffs that he has outfitted with leather

pockets to hold fishing line and hooks, fire starter, a knife, a compass, and a flashlight.

Every piece of his \$30,000 state-of-the-art electronic recording equipment has its place in his mobile office, a pea-green 1964 VW bus that transports him to trailheads at 50 miles per hour, tops. He has rigged it with a woodstove, a cell phone, and a laptop computer. Hempton shrugs at the juxtaposition of high tech and low tech, admitting to a gaggle of internal contradictions. He is professionally dependent on technology but takes full-moon solo "walkabouts" carrying little more than matches and a tarp. He considers himself a purist, refusing to edit his recordings in a studio, yet one fourth of his business is developing sounds for computer games.

Hempton doesn't try to explain the incongruities. "I've learned to trust

my instincts," he says. A recording session in Sri Lanka provided the most dramatic lesson. Alone at night, miles into the Sinharaja Forest, Hempton suddenly felt an alarm close to panic. He held an internal discussion, his sensible self arguing that there was nothing to fear, his scared self yelling "Run, man, run!" Realizing that he could leave Fritz with the tape rolling, he retreated at a rapid walk. When he replayed the tape, he heard his own footsteps becoming more and more distant, then the unmistakable growl of a leopard.

By 1990 Hempton was convinced that the noises of civilization were overwhelming the natural soundscape worldwide. He embarked on a four-month trip to capture and preserve pristine sounds on each continent. The result was *Vanishing Dawn Chorus*, a video that won a 1992 Emmy Award.



clearing the air

Fourteen ways to quiet the skies

The majority of the U.S. population—70 percent—lives within 20 miles of a major airport. While the area affected by noise is typically within 25 miles of airports and 3-5 miles each side of a flight path, the U.S. Citizens Aviation Watch Association regularly receives complaints about noise from people as far as 40 miles away from airports. Which isn't surprising: A jet plane at takeoff produces 100 decibels of sound, which is 10 million times louder than a normal conversation (30 decibels). Here's how your community can protect itself from all the racket:

1. Increase local control of airports with regard to expansion, number and time of takeoffs and landings, and ground operations.

2. Demand that two-thirds of airport commission members live within areas where *average* noise levels exceed 65 decibels, what the Federal Aviation Administration calls moderate noise exposure.

3. Abandon the sound pressure level of 65 decibels that the FAA uses to separate low noise exposure from moderate noise exposure; 65 decibels is still unhealthy. Use 55 decibels until a descriptor that includes low-frequency noise is developed.

4. Remove the FAA from oversight of environmental quality and public health; the agency sees its main role as promoting air transportation, which is a conflict of interest. Noise needs to be regulated by some combination of the Environmental Protection Agency and local oversight.

5. Demand objective health studies of noise and other pollutants near airports.

6. Demand that airports and airlines pay the full cost of airline travel. Remove all FAA and local subsidies. Increase landing fees to cover decreases in property values, insulation programs, health effects, and annoyance, and increase fuel taxes to account for environmental and public health damage.

7. Expand soundproofing programs to all buildings experiencing an average greater than 55 decibels from airports. All sensitive properties—homes, churches, schools, day care centers, hospitals—should be protected against indoor single-event readings exceeding 45 decibels, even with the windows open.

8. Increase the minimum altitude for general aviation craft and helicopters to 2,000 feet above ground level, and implement an effective policing mechanism. Impose a minimum flight altitude of 2,500 feet for tour operations and commercial transport services such as air taxis.

9. Ban flights over and within two miles of nonurban national parks, wilderness areas, national monuments,

Utne Reader
May-June 2000

More poem than political statement, it tracks Hempton as he hears the hymn of the earth awakening.

The attention that video drew to the loss of quiet helped Hempton launch One Square Inch of Silence, his plan for saving the soundscape of America's national parks. The proposal calls on Congress to designate one square inch in each of 10 national parks as zero-tolerance zones for human noise. Devilishly simple in concept, this minuscule set-aside has enormous ramifications. To eliminate the drone of a generator, several square miles would have to be noise-free; to eliminate the roar of an airplane, tens of square miles. Imagine no more air tours of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park or Grand Canyon, Hempton says wistfully; no more helicopters in Mesa Verde or tour buses in Yosemite.

Among federal bureaucrats, One

Square Inch evokes chuckles and regrets. "This system doesn't function that way," says Bill Schmidt, a natural resources representative for the National Park Service. "I don't know how we'd deal with it as a practical matter."

Still, Schmidt says, Hempton's documentation of the steady decline of noise-free intervals has won serious attention from the Park Service. A new manual expected this year will guide park managers to curb the racket produced by their own operations, as well as the noise visitors generate. It's a start, says Hempton, but it may be too little, too late. While the dawdling Park Service spends millions collecting data on how much noise visitors will tolerate, songbirds have a hard time hearing one another's warbles over the din. "A tax is being usurped on our health and well-being—and on the environment," Hempton fumes. "If we con-

tinue to manage national parks so they no longer have the ability to transform us, we'll all go to hell fast."

Within the small community of natural-sound recorders, Hempton is a maverick. While other professionals are seeking solo voices in isolation, Hempton seeks the full natural choir, with all the distance and space of an actual outdoor listening experience. In contrast to academically trained scientists, who identify every sound by precise location and species, Hempton's documentation is lax. What he offers in place of scientific accuracy is an aesthetic perspective that encourages people to listen to the environment around them, take note of what they hear, and enjoy it, says Greg Budney, a curator at Cornell University's Library of Natural Sounds.

But Hempton is obsessive about detail. For a computer golf game

national seashores, and other sensitive and pristine public lands. Excepted would be flights for emergencies, research, and construction and maintenance activities.

10. Support a global nighttime curfew. Hundreds of airports already have curfews, but local curfews only shift the problem elsewhere.

11. Develop a high-speed rail alternative to flights of less than 500 miles. Redirect government investment from airport expansion to high-speed rail, and support efforts to quiet rail transit.

12. Ban commercial Super Sonic Transport flights from U.S. airports and block proposed corporate SST flights from U.S. airspace.

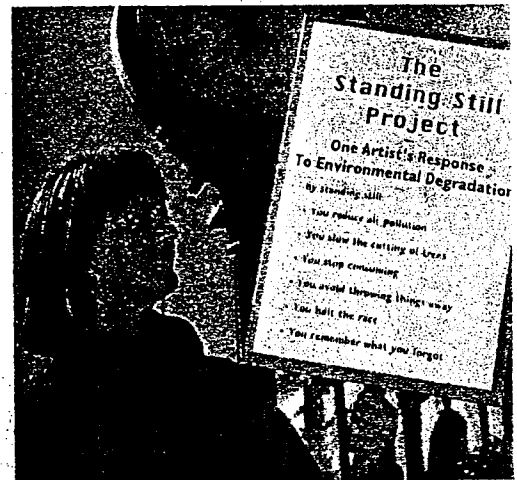
13. Support quieter, cleaner aircraft technology, called Stage IV.

14. Avoid solutions that shift noise. A fairer distribution might make sense for many airports, but moving the noise around doesn't solve the problem and divides people who should be united.

—Les Blomberg

Les Blomberg is executive director of the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse, which maintains an exhaustive library and network at www.nonoise.org. From *The New Rules* (Winter 1999). Subscriptions: \$35/yr. (4 issues) from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1313 Fifth St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; www.ilsr.org.

LES CIZEK



The Standing Still Project

According to Erica Fielder, environmental art teacher at the College of the Redwoods Mendocino campus, by standing still, you: reduce air pollution, slow the cutting of trees, stop consuming, avoid throwing things away, halt the race, and remember what you forgot. Erica stands still regularly on Main Street in Fort Bragg, California.

From *Turning Wheel* (Winter 2000). Subscriptions: \$35/yr. (4 issues) from Buddhist Peace Fellowship, Box 4650, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Sounding Off About NOISE

Everyone complains about loud sounds in the city. But is there something you can actually do about it?

By SANDRA YIN

Our Town
June 8, 2000

Mention the word "noise," and New Yorkers sound off about the din that invades their work, play and sleep. In many cases, their attempts to get others to pipe down are a lesson in futility.

One Upper East Sider, who asked to remain anonymous, said the noise from cars near her building on East 62nd Street near York Avenue gets her worked up. If she had grenades, she said, "I'd be lobbing them out the window." Instead, all she can do is pull the pillow over her head.

At the end of each full Community Board 8 meeting, chairman Barry Schneider repeats a mantra that includes the phrase, "Horn-honking must be abated." At meetings, restaurants often face opposition from board members who believe the introduction of sidewalk cafes on otherwise tranquil residential streets is the beginning of the end. Some people near the Queensboro Bridge exit ramps don't show their apartments on weekends, said Schneider, fearing the honking will scare buyers away.



Residents complain of diminished quality of life when drivers stuck in traffic near the Queensboro Bridge lean on their horns. The New York City Noise Code prohibits non-emergency horn honking.



The worst helicopter traffic in the country hovers over New York City.

Some residents who face recurring noise adjust to avoid it. Bob Davis, a member of the Midtown North Precinct Community Council, will never open his window while he lives above an open-air parking lot between Ninth and Tenth avenues on West 53rd Street. With more than 200 cars right outside his living room window, he said, "There's rarely a time that a car alarm is not going off." He regularly calls them, sending parking attendants scurrying to cancel the alarms at the 24-hour lot.

Barbara Feld, a member of the 44th Street Better Block Association, avoids her apartment on Wednesdays. That's when car alarms go off for two hours, while their owners attend matinees.

In Clinton, tour buses barrel through the streets, trucks roar by and buses idle in no standing zones. It's an area, said Judy Shortwell, vice-president of the Midtown North Precinct Council. At the council, traffic noise has replaced prostitution as the No. 1 problem.

When the box gets blocked, cars sit outside her window, "blowing their horns as if it's going to matter," she said. "West of Eighth Avenue, we don't get the same attention that Fifth and Sixth avenues get," she said, referring to the dearth of noise enforcement in her area. Sometimes the vibration of idling buses makes bricks fall off her building.

During the day, she often goes outside to ask drivers to pipe down. Some get out of their cars and go after her. "We're beside ourselves," she said. "We don't know what to do. It's got to come down from the top and we have yet to see that happen."

And there's no getting away from the noise. Jean-Daniel Nolan went to Central Park's Sheep Meadow recently, for some peace and quiet. Instead, a helicopter hovered for half

an hour, he recalled, like a huge lawnmower above his head. According to Executive Director Joy Held, the Helicopter Noise Coalition of New York wants to create a helicopter "no fly" zone over the five boroughs with an exception for emergency aircraft for the city, which has the most helicopter traffic in the country.

Unwanted noise resides at the center of a conflict that pits people living quietly with an active, vibrant tourist destination. Said Davis, who refuses to open his windows: "There seems to be a lack of awareness on the part of commuters that come from outside the city that people actually live here."

How to muffle the din

By SANDRA YIN

When it comes to noise, New York City residents do have recourse. But because noise control falls under so many different jurisdictions, it's not always clear where to call for help.

The Department of Environmental Protection (718-DEP-HELP) and the New York Police Department (1-888-677-5433) both operate 24-hour hotlines for noise complaints.

DEP deploys 40 air and noise pollution inspectors to investigate complaints. When somebody phones in a problem, DEP later schedules an appointment and shows up with a sound meter to investigate within three days, said spokesman Geoffrey Ryan. From April 1, 1999-April 1, 2000, the agency logged approximately 9,500 noise complaints, said Ryan, down from a total of 10,745 the previous year. The number of actual sources of noise is smaller than the number of callers. A restaurant under new management that jacks up the music volume might spur several complaint calls.

DEP, whose mission, among others, is to enforce the noise code, handles all kinds of complaints. But most, said Ryan, are associated with stationary sound sources, including off-hours construction, noisy cooling units and music that seeps out of bars, clubs or sound studios.

Calls to the police Quality-of-Life hotline are passed on to the local precinct for action. Depending on the nature of the complaint and the caseload, police may go check out the problem immediately, handing out warnings or summons, depending on what they find. To complain about excessive horn-honking, loud music or noise from neighbors, call your local police precinct.

For a neighbor-to-neighbor problem, it may be easiest to speak directly with the source. Failing that, asking the culprit's landlord to intercede may help. When recurring noise does not warrant an arrest, police often make referrals to the free dispute resolution programs at the Midtown Community Court or the Manhattan Mediation Center. [See accompanying box.]

Complaints about city garbage trucks would go to the Department of Sanitation, while those about commercial



Every few days, it seems like another street is being ripped open, jackhammers pounding. At 11 p.m. one recent weekday night, a workman tore into West 109th Street.

carting companies which tend to operate at night should go to the Trade Waste Commission.

Because problems are not always routed to the right place, Kathy Kinsella, district manager of Community Board 5, urges people to let their community boards help them navigate the maze of city agencies that handle noise issues.

Noise abatement takes many forms. Once or twice a month, police with the 19th Precinct, which covers the area from East 59th to East 96th streets, conduct sweeps for horn-bonking near the Queensboro Bridge, Community Affairs Police Officer JoAnne Dowd said. At least four times a year, the police coordinate with other agencies including the Department of Health, Fire Department and DEP and swoop in on chronic hot spots, such as bars or clubs that are associated with a variety of offenses, including noise.

Since the beginning of the year, the 19th Precinct has fielded 132 quality-of-life complaints, most related to traffic. But it's hard to catch them in the act. "We don't have the personnel to investigate every complaint immediately," noted Dowd, adding that they are required to answer every job that comes to the precinct.

Dealing with noise in the city that never sleeps is a challenge, experts say. Part of the problem is that the noise code is out of date, said Arline Bronzaf, an environmental psychologist who is a member of the mayor's Council on the Environment and chairwoman of its noise committee. "The code is 30 years old," she said. "There are noises that exist today that we didn't have then."

DEP recently asked for Bronzaf's help in writing the scope of work for a request for proposal for consultants to update the noise code. While she credits the agency for recognizing the code is obsolete, she criticized the agency too. "If only 20 percent of the time DEP issues violations," she asked, "what happens to the 80 percent of customers left dissatisfied?"

DEP spokesman Ryan estimated about 15 percent of complaints investigated result in the issuance of a violation. In many cases, he said, no actual violation of the noise code occurred.

It may be that the gap between the standard set by the noise code and what people hear needs to be closed. Bronzaf, who has served as a noise expert both here and abroad, believes illegal decibel thresholds are set too high and should be lowered. Councilman A. Gifford Miller, whose particular pet peeve is horn-bonking, takes a more moderate approach. Although he agreed the code needs updating, he said, most of all, it needs enforcement. "If there was full enforcement of the noise code," he said, "the city would be a quieter place."

In response to accusations of lax enforcement, Ryan said,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

How Bad Vibes Affect Your Health

By SANDRA YIN

Our Town
June 8, 2000

Whether New Yorkers' ears are going down the tubes, no one knows for sure.

Asked whether New Yorkers are more at risk for long-term, noise-induced hearing loss, Dr. Mark Cramer, a noise expert at New York Presbyterian Hospital, responded: "As a group? Probably not."

But a recent study of 64,000 New York City residents by the Noise Center of the League for the Hard of Hearing, a hearing rehabilitation and human service agency, seems to suggest otherwise. Findings showed a dramatic 15-60 percent increase in the occurrence of hearing loss across age groups over an 18-year period. "The only explanation that we see," said Nancy Nadler, director of the Noise Center, "is that the noise level is going up."

If it is, New Yorkers are at greater risk for a host of health problems.

"Too much noise for too long a time is not a good thing," said Cramer, who described how a person's hearing range narrows at both ends. On the lower end, sensitivity to sound is reduced and on the upper end, tolerance for loudness decreases. People who either can't hear you or say you're yelling when you're not, probably suffer some hearing loss, said Cramer, who has fit out whole rock groups with custom-made earplugs. He recommends cylindrical

foam plugs, which can be squished and then swell to fill the ear canal as one of the best forms of hearing protection.

After hearing a loud noise, a person may experience a temporary ringing in the ears or difficulty hearing. With repeated exposure, the temporary shift in hearing can become permanent. How susceptible a person is to hearing loss varies from person to person, said Cramer. Two people may work for years in a noisy workplace. One of them may suffer hearing loss, while the other does not.

But noise is more than just a threat to our ears. Besides harming hearing or disrupting sleep, unwanted sounds, even quiet ones, can trigger a physical response to the stress, according to noise experts. The heart rate increases, blood pressure rises and blood cholesterol rises.

Psychological research has shown that noise takes a toll on learning, too, said Arline Bronzaf, an environmental psychologist who has studied noise problems for 25 years. Young children acquire language skills more slowly and are less likely to explore their environments when they live in a noisy home.

In her landmark study, the reading ability of sixth-graders whose classroom was next to elevated train tracks lagged a year behind their peers on the quiet side of the school. After acoustic ceilings were mounted in the rooms facing the tracks and rubber pads added to the tracks to muffle the sound, the reading scores of the children formerly on the loud side caught up to those on the quiet side.

When the sound of someone else's drummer continues to pound, "learned helplessness" sets in. Bronzaf described it as the feeling that, no matter what you do, you just can't fight it.

"The bottom line is," she said, "you're probably pretty miserable."

If you have a noise complaint, consider taking the following steps:

- Go to the source when possible and try to resolve the problem amicably.
- Document the problem. Be prepared to provide the street address of the site, the time noise occurs and, if relevant, the company at the site or the kind of equipment causing the noise.
- Try free mediation if, after trying to solve the problem, you are not satisfied. For Midtown Manhattan residents: Dispute Resolution Program at the Midtown Community Court, (212) 484-2715. Other parts of Manhattan: Manhattan Mediation Center, (212) 577-1730.

In New York City, whom you turn to for help depends on the source of your noise problem.

Bars or nightclubs

Examples: sound equipment inside the club, including speakers or a public address system

Call both the NYC Police Department at your local precinct and the NYC Department of Environmental Protection at (718) DEP-HELP.

Building Machinery

Examples: air conditioners, roof equipment, elevators, garbage collection

Call the NYC Department of Environmental Protection at (718) DEP-HELP.

Construction

Examples: building reconstruction by sound equipment, street at night

The New York City Department of Buildings is responsible for granting and overseeing construction permits. To contact the Department of Buildings, call your local community board.

Crowd-related noise

Examples: loud parties, automobile noise

Call your local police precinct.

Garbage Pickups

Examples: late-night and early-morning garbage pickups that disturb the peace

For complaints about white New York City Sanitation trucks, call the NYC Department of Sanitation Community Affairs at (212) 788-3793. For complaints involving all other garbage collection companies, call the NYC Trade Waste Commission at (212) 676-6300.

Sources: Midtown Community Court Noise Response Guide and the Noise Center of the League for the Hard of Hearing

I Hear Too Darn Much One man's advice when it comes to the wonderful world of earplugs

By JIM BROWNOLO

My favorite traveling companion has become my trusty little pink ear stoppers.

They're sort of a combination of cotton candy and slightly chewed bubble gum. These are the best, to my

way of thinking. They may not have the highest noise reduction rating, but if you jam them in far enough — like until they just brush up against your brain stem — the loudest thing going on is your own breathing. And in addition, if you hum, you can drown out even the most stalwart panhandler. (If they escaped the Giuliani purge, they're tough.)

Unlike rubber or plastic earplugs, these little pink things are malleable. You can pull them apart and create any size and shape. After all, you may have a petite, shell-like ear

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HVC P450

LETTERS

Be Heard About Noise

To the Editor:

Kudos for your attention to noise ("Sounding Off About Noise," June 8) and your call for a "noise czar."

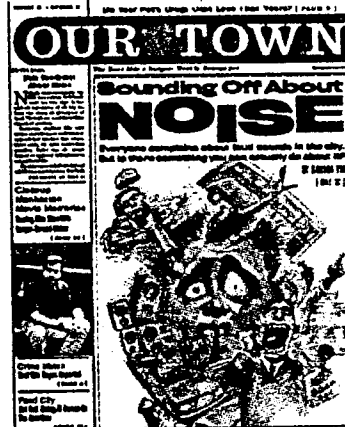
We urge individuals with helicopter noise and fumes complaints to call the automated city helicopter complaint line at (212) 312-3964, and to contact their elected officials at the city, state and federal levels as well as the Federal Aviation Administration.

Concerned community action can bring results. Regarding helicopters, community advocacy over the past four years has achieved the following: the mayor's policy to ban tour helicopters from city heliports (also endorsed by the governor); a study of helicopter noise impacts on the tri-state area; a similar national study to be conducted this year; the introduction of the Helicopter Noise Control and Safety Act into Congress; the closure of a heliport; an electronic news-gathering helicopter noise manual (in process); and the establishment of a city helicopter oversight committee, among others.

We encourage Our Town readers to be heard about noise and to join in our efforts to eliminate non-emergency helicopters from New York City land and airspace, including waterways.

JOY A. HELD

PRESIDENT, HELICOPTER NOISE
COALITION OF NEW YORK CITY



also in West Side Spirit 6/22/00
HNC p451

COMMENT

Lance Morrow

The Buzz of Summer

What ever happened to the nice, quiet vacation?

WE CHECKED INTO A HOTEL A FEW YEARS AGO ON THE SOUTH RIM OF THE Grand Canyon and peered out the window into majestic, blue-ish prehistory—one of the planet's more powerful astonishments. A family checked into the room next door, and a moment later, through the thin walls, we heard the sound of the television coming on. Loud.

Later we pitched our tent in Chaco Canyon, just at dusk. Presently there rumbled into the campground five or six rhinoceros RVs, behemoths with generators on their roofs that hummed and groaned all night to power the people's TVs and air conditioners. They slept sealed up inside the beasts, and in the morning the rhinos rolled off single file down the blacktop, heading for Zion.

It is time to turn off the machines when we come to nature. In summer small planes drone and snarl overhead. Helicopters clatter by from time to time—the newly rich ostentatiously commuting to their indulgences, their cash turned into blighting noise. This market has released too much money into the atmos-

phere in the form of private planes and onto the lakes and rivers as roostering speedboats and their juvenile-delinquent offspring, Jet Skis, which have the charm of chain saws. Loud, alien metal has colonized the sky.

Some people love noise—their own noise, the sound of their own pleasures. Some of us hate noise—or, at any rate, other people's noise. The world is divided between the makers of noise and the victims of noise.

Some of us may be hypocrites about it too. The other night at sunset in upstate New York, I shot down Seneca Lake

at 50 m.p.h. in the bow of my brother-in-law's speedboat—the ruffled surface of the water turned pewter, touched with the sunset's tangerine, and a fine spray stinging my face like BBs.

It is better to go noiselessly on water, propelled by wind or paddle. You see things clearly. You think. The point of noise is not to think, not to see, not to be still but rather to throw yourself headlong into the rush of motion.

A summer or two ago on a lake in Ontario, I let my canoe drift on a light breeze down the shoreline of a piney island. A muskie, 4 ft. long, mistook my canoe for a floating log and came to laze in my shadow, his surly, prehistoric head 3 ft. from mine in the emerald water. He rippled his ventrals and pectorals to stabilize his dreamy suspension. I moved only my eyes at first, and then not even those. At length, not thinking, I shifted my arm on the gunwale. The motion roused the fish from its dream. It finned away and vanished into the deeper emerald light.

The moment, which meant much to me, was possible only because of my absolute stillness. Such things happen if you wait silently.

It is time for people to go on vacation—if they are going into nature—with a certain amount of humility. The virtue of humility, like silence, is nearly extinct. But humility, if you see what I mean, opens doors. Noise destroys everything. Noise is an idiot.



ILLUSTRATION FOR TIME BY MICHAEL KLEIN

HNC P452

The New York Times

A18

EDITORIALS/LETTERS MONDAY, JULY 10, 2000

On TV, No-Frills News

To the Editor:

I was glad to see your July 3 Business Day article concerning the CBS affiliate WBBM in Chicago, and its decision to adopt a no-frills, no-gimmick style of news coverage.

It is a hopeful sign that TV stations are getting around to treating that segment of viewers who are discerning with something more than "it bleeds, it leads" — a style, I think, that has "tuned out" so many viewers.

If it is successful, it will send a message to other stations around the country that no amount of flashy computer graphics, "live" helicopter pictures or screaming headlines can make a marginal story a major one.

JOHN KELLY

New York, July 3, 2000

HNK P 453

The New York Times

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2000

EDITORIALS/LETTERS

A26

Make the Parks an Oasis From the Din



Eric Johnson

To the Editor:
Re "National Parks Will Ban Reaction Snowmobiling" (news article, April 27):
The next roar we hear will probably come from snowmobile manufacturers pressing the Park Service to retreat, but that roar couldn't be any louder than what visitors hear during winter weekends in Yellowstone National Park. It is now up to the American people to support the National Park Service as it tackles this problem.
Snowmobiles pollute the air of our national parks, interfere with wildlife and deprive non-motorized visitors of peace and quiet. Too many natural sounds are being drowned out by jet skis, sightseeing helicopters, car horns and off-road vehicles. Americans deserve opportunities to escape the din of the rat race, and national parks (which make up less than 4 percent of the country's area) should provide them.
WILLIAM H. MEADOWS
President, Wilderness Society
Washington, April 27, 2000

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